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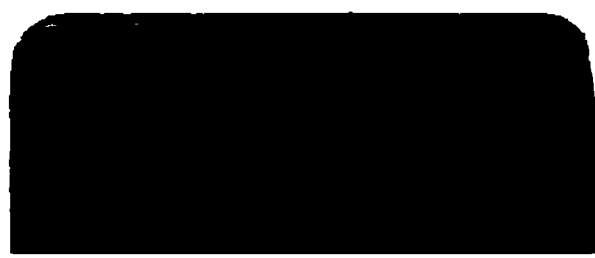
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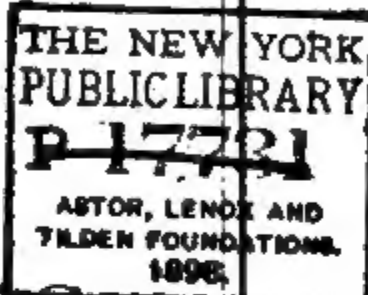


*Hon. Stephen Salisbury.*

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF  
SHADE TREES  
AND  
PUBLIC GROUNDS  
OF THE  
CITY OF WORCESTER,

1870. - 1887/88

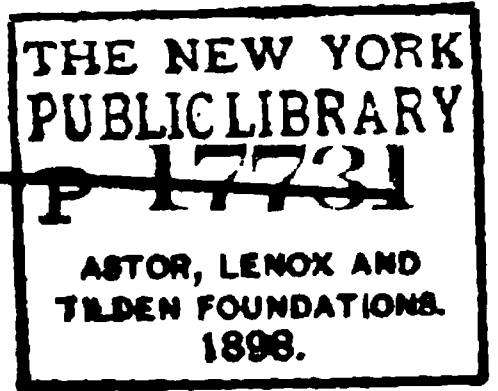
WORCESTER:  
SNOW BROTHERS, CITY PRINTERS, 228 MAIN STREET.  
1871.





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF



## SHADE TREES AND PUBLIC GROUNDS

OF THE

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# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS

## OF

# SHADE TREES AND PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable City Council of the City of Worcester:*

The Commissioners of Shade Trees and Public Grounds, in obedience to the requirements of Section 21st, of the Charter of the city, have the honor to submit the following REPORT of their "Acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds "and Shade Trees thereon, and on said streets and highways, "and an account of receipts and expenditures for the same."

Balance, January 1, 1870,	\$1,330 62	
Appropriation,	1,000 00	
Received—hire of Elm Park,	150 00	
"    Apples,    "	5 00	
"    Grass,    "	150 00	
"    Higgins & Weixler,	10 00	
	<hr/>	\$2,645 62

**PAID—TREES AND SETTING.**

Marcus D. Cronin,	3 00	
James Draper,	20 00	
O. B. Hadwen,	145 00	
D. M. McIntire,	3 00	
Charles Wood,	7 00	
Wood & Bartlett,	15 00	
	<hr/>	\$193 00

**PAID—BOXING AND PRUNING.**

William T. Harris,	30 00	
E. W. Lincoln, (paid out by,)	8 00	
Ezra Maynard,	11 00	
John Swinks & Son,	970 26	
	<hr/>	\$1,019 26

## PAID—MISCELLANEOUS.

Spy, 3.50 ; Gazette, 1.50,	5 00	
E. R. Fiske,	4 50	
Highways, Labor, Dirt, &c.,	361 00	
J. D. Lovell, (grass seed,)	1 58	
G. T. Sutton, repairing pump,	8 75	
Wm. F. Wheeler, Cemetery gate,	4 15	
	<hr/>	\$384 48
		1,596 74
Balance not drawn,		\$1,048 88
	\$2,645 62	<hr/>

The amount of work done in 1870, as will be apparent from an examination of the vouchers for the above items of expenditure, was largely in excess of that executed in any former year. A careful and thorough personal examination of the condition of the SHADE TREES, within the jurisdiction of the Commission, made it evident that the task of their effectual protection must be prosecuted with energy and system. It was evident that the City Council felt disinclined to appropriate the sums necessary for laying-out and ornamenting the Common and Elm Park, even were those tracts of public land in a suitable state for improvement. Hence it became obvious that the policy of our predecessors, of planting trees and providing them with safe-guards only in cases of absolute necessity, in the hope of accumulating a fund in aid of municipal grants, must be summarily relinquished. A strict supervision was exercised, however, and it is believed that an equivalent has been rendered for every dollar that was spent. In this connection some details may be of interest:—

Of living trees removed (interfering with others, or obstacles to public passage,) there were Fifteen (15). The dead Trees cut away, in different portions of the City, at various times, and ranging in size from two (2) inches to two (2) feet in diameter, numbered One Hundred and Ninety-Three (193). Three Hundred and Seventy-Two (372) box guards were erected, and upwards of Four Hundred (400) old ones repaired and put in order. The Trees upon Elm Park, Agricultural, Lincoln, Garden, Catherine, Thomas,



Summer, Shrewsbury, and (partially) South Main Streets, as well as upon Oak and Harrington Avenues have been trimmed, generally to the satisfaction of the Commissioners. In a few instances complaint was made of rude and unskillful work by an employee of the Commission, whose life-long occupation seemed a sufficient guaranty of his competency. Time it is believed, will heal over and conceal such wounds, and the Commissioners, profiting by experience, will confine themselves, even more rigidly, to the approved results of practice under their immediate direction. Upon several other streets, besides those enumerated, from two (2) to ten (10) trees were trimmed as necessity required.

One occasion for pruning the Shade Trees upon the streets, is too much over looked by those who deprecate all pruning whatever. The Public Lamps are very frequently so located that, except in Winter, their light is utterly obscured by the dense foliage that surrounds them. In many cases a transposition of the lamp-posts has obviated all difficulty and, at the same time, proved of increased convenience to the neighborhood. But troubles of this sort will never cease, so long as street-lamps are deliberately eclipsed by their wanton location in unsuitable places, without previous consultation with the Commission, or in spite of its emphatic protest.

The planting of SHADE TREES along new streets is too much neglected by the projectors and builders of such streets. And yet, individual owners should do this, of their own volition, prior to soliciting the acceptance of a street by the City Council. The man who cannot perceive his private interest in the matter should have his wits sharpened by a refusal of the public to grind his axes. The superb row of Maples in front of the residence of Draper Ruggles; the splendid specimens of forest growth which overshadow the long avenue before the estate of Darius Rice; and the massive and thrifty Elms, extending for many a rod of Piedmont Street, in evidence of the generous toil and unselfish spirit of George Jaques; may well challenge emulation. But if such rivalry is not voluntarily undertaken, might it not be legitimately exacted as a condition precedent to the acceptance of new streets?

The Commissioners have caused to be set out or have superintended the planting of nearly One Hundred (100) trees during the past year. Many of these now line the avenues of approach to the Dix Street School House, it being thought that some knowledge of arboriculture might fitly supplement the general course in a *Training* School. The trees were mostly MAPLES; the genus *Acer*, in its many species, affording none which is superior, if any that is equal, for rapidity of growth and vigor of habit; adapting itself to almost every kind of soil; in Spring and Summer clothed with the brightest verdure; and in Autumn causing our streets to glow with the most gorgeous and varied hues. The Elm should be restricted to our longer and broader highways, where the far-reaching limbs that spread out from its massive boles may canopy a limitless vista. The ASH, too, if happily located, as at the junction of Elm and Oak Streets, has a rugged beauty of its own. But, all things considered, hardiness, vitality under abuse, density of shade, cleanliness of foliage, and above all its tinted variegation, the Maple is fairly entitled to rank among Shade Trees *facile princeps*. Could boyish nature be reconstructed by saving grace or act of Congress, and sticks and stones pass into quietude, that crowning glory of an American Forest, the CHESTNUT, might well challenge the precedence, at least in our larger Parks. The Linden is wholly unfit for use as a street tree. The odor of its blossoms is disagreeable to many, while when shed, they constitute a nuisance upon the sidewalk. Their trunks are infested with borers which literally honeycomb the limbs as they ascend in their destructive progress. Their foliage is the prey of an insect measurer which, if not the canker-worm, is fully as mischievous and equally fond of dropping in among the ladies. A thoroughly healthy and robust Linden tree is not known to exist within the limits of the City; while the street, to which the species has given its name, is actually disfigured by a row of diseased and unsightly specimens. The HORSE CHESTNUT merits a similar, though perhaps not so severe, condemnation. When in blossom it displays a wondrous beauty; but at other times, whether as the mark for sticks

and stones aimed by juvenile avarice, in its neascent love of acquisition for its own sake ; or as fouling and rendering unsafe the public side-walks by the shedding thereon of a dense mass of coarse and decaying foliage, they present themselves in a most repulsive aspect, utterly barren of attraction. In a park only, may they find appropriate and welcome space.

With a view to reducing the cost of protection to the Shade Trees upon the public streets, a trial is making of a new method, which promises greater utility and offers fewer facilities for juvenile or adult mischief. The successful establishment of upright rods, or staves, upon the larger trees, will release, for service elsewhere, a large number of box-guards that are outgrown where they stand. And yet there appears to be but indifferent encouragement in the effort to protect Shade Trees from harm, when it is considered how much of the damage results from wanton recklessness or malicious mischief. The construction of a new building involves the almost total destruction of the trees which surround the lot. The quarryman abrades their bark, preferring to grind their trunks with his ponderous hubs rather than avail himself of an ample intermediate space. The carpenter and mason cut and slash among the limbs, to clear a way for their stagings. Should a casualty happen among the laborers, the unhitched horse of a physician will dispose of the little verdure remaining.

For some years past the care of maintaining the fences that enclose the BURIAL GROUND on Mechanic street, and in Pine Meadow, has been assumed by this commission. It seemed highly desirable that these places of ancient sepulture, literally traversed by almost continuous railway trains, should not be suffered, by any lâches of others, to become offensively conspicuous in their desolation. A doubt, however, arising in the minds of some of the members of the Commission, relative to its jurisdiction in the premises, led to the following correspondence :—

COMMISSION ON SHADE TREES AND PUBLIC GROUNDS  
WORCESTER, MASS., Dec. 27, 1870.

THOMAS L. NELSON, Esq., City Solicitor.

MY DEAR SIR :—By Sec. 21 of the Revised Charter of the City,

the "sole care, superintendence and management of the public grounds belonging to said City of Worcester," was entrusted to this Commission.

Will you have the kindness to furnish me with your opinion whether the pieces of land known as the Mechanic Street Burial Ground and the Pine Meadow Burial Ground are included within our jurisdiction? Questions of importance are likely to arise, hereafter, in this connection; and it is for the interest of the City that the point, herein submitted, should be determined.

Very Respectfully,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Chairman.

WORCESTER, Dec. 28, 1870.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Chairman, &c.

DEAR SIR :—Replying to your communication of yesterday, I am of the opinion that the jurisdiction of the Board of Commissioners of Public Grounds under Sec. 21 of the Revised Charter of the City, does not extend to or include the Mechanic street and Pine Meadow Burial Grounds referred to in your communication.

Very Respectfully,

T. L. NELSON, City Solicitor.

It will therefore, devolve upon the Mayor and Aldermen to take care, in the future, of those portions of the City property. Their present condition is a source of private mortification and public reproach. The resort of juvenile gamblers and prostitutes, almost any use to which they might be devoted would be an improvement. The plan of our former colleague, Mr. George Jaques, so unanimously endorsed by the School Board, offers a feasible and eminently judicious method of rescuing the Burial Ground upon Mechanic street from its shameful state and of converting it into an ornament of what is likely to prove a bustling thoroughfare. This Commission, divested of all responsibility in the matter, by the opinion of the City Solicitor, takes this occasion to reaffirm its own most cordial and earnest approbation of the plan of Mr. Jaques. A hope is timidly ventured, with all deference, that these grounds, if improved as proposed, may receive somewhat more of rustic adornment than is afforded by the planting of such scraggy twins as those whose forlorn arms are stretched over the bleak desolation of the play-yard at the Training School.

Shortly after the organization of the Commission for 1870, it was discovered that several rods of the fence to the Mechanic street Burial Ground was prostrate. The breach was at once closed by a thorough repair of the fence, at an expense of twenty-seven dollars and eighty-three cents (\$27.83). The fence on the S. E. side of the Pine Meadow Burial Ground, towards the Boston and Albany railway, has also been re-erected and strengthened. This work was completed at a cost of nineteen dollars and ninety-three cents (\$19.93).

The total amount paid, within the past year, for work done upon those two Burial Grounds, it will thus be perceived, is forty-seven dollars and seventy-six cents (\$47.76), which sum should be refunded from the City Treasury to the account of Public Grounds. Such repayment would be a simple act of justice; the annual appropriation for the uses of this Commission scarcely admitting of lavish or unwarranted generosity to other departments.

The condition of the COMMON does not challenge admiration. The Commissioners are helpless for its improvement. A "Public Ground," the "sole care, superintendence, and management" of which is vested in them by the charter, is lost to the community by the gross super-position of *Meeting, Town, and School Houses*, and of *Railway Tracks*. Every old citizen has a separate pathway of his own across it. Each new settler usurps for himself the right of an independent track, generally blazing it with his knife-blade upon the seats or tree-trunks. A good and permanent walk is imperatively required upon the North side; but, with inadequate means, how can it be constructed? A vast quantity of soil is needed to grade the surface and put it in good heart to nourish a close and thrifty sward. Better material for such purposes than street-scrapings unquestionably exists. But as it is not furnished gratuitously, the poverty and not the will of the Commission make it a suppliant for the bounty of the official *Highwayman*. Nor, indeed, are street-scrapings so poor but what, in process of time, they can be coaxed to something better, if not greener than the plantain. The entire bulk of manure from the City Stables is now delivered upon the Poor Farm, being hauled

some two (2) miles or more beyond the Common which is starving for lack of it. If the collection of offal were so systematised as to be rendered available for the support of a piggery upon that Farm, as it should be, an existing evil would be converted into a source of profit. Sufficient pork would be gained, for the supply of that meagre table so strenuously insisted upon by the City Fathers, at their Annual Dinner; and a portion of the manure from the City Stables might be spared, to stay the complete impoverishment of the Public Grounds.

This Commission holds a very definite opinion of what should be done to render the COMMON attractive and ornamental; as it emphatically is neither at present. But it is not deemed expedient to ask appropriations for the decoration of an irregular and imperfect fraction, when measures have been initiated by the People to free the whole from incumbrance.

During the last Summer, at the request of the Highway Commissioner and of Mayor Blake, (Chairman of the Highway Committee,) permission was accorded for the temporary deposit upon the Common, westward of the railway, of the block stones intended for the pavement of South Main street. It is not believed that the land suffered harm, while some noxious weeds were undoubtedly suppressed. But an opportunity was thereby furnished the reporters for the public press to air their antiquarian lore by covert allusions to Druidical remains and sly explorations for Runic inscriptions. Virtuous complaints were also elicited from members of the first parish, as well as from shareholders in Railway Corporations, all of whose privileges of grumbling are based upon concessions founded in derogation of common right. But great inconvenience was spared to Main Street, by relieving it from the incessant traction over its surface by heavy loads of stone; and a considerable saving of labor and time inured to the City by the accommodations thus afforded. This Commission is obliged to practice such rigid economy that it may possibly exaggerate into a virtue what is only a merit; in that event other and more opulent Departments can shun all imitation of so infrequent an example.

The FLAG STAFF has been repaired with the assent of

this Commission by the Military Committee of the City Council. The original design was to change its position to the esplanade in front of Portland Street, but this purpose was abandoned in deference to the positive objections of the Commissioners, by whom it was insisted that the proper location of the Flag Staff is near the site of the old Gun House, in advance of the Bigelow monument, where the rustle of its folds may soothe the slumbers of those who shed their blood in defence of its right to be unfurled. It is understood, although no official knowledge is possessed of the fact, that a contract exists in which provision is made for surrounding the Flag Staff with a stand from which to disperse music and oratory to gaping multitudes. Waiving all reference to the infringement upon the province of this Commission, the utter unsuitableness of the position for such a purpose is too obvious to admit of its selection without a decided protest. The two great pathways that cross the Common, diagonally, have their points of intersection here. Those paths will always exist, for the convenience of the public, even if all others should be discontinued. Hither, also, will doubtless converge the line of pedestrian travel from Portland street northwardly, and the reflux to the south. It must be obvious upon the least reflection, that with a large crowd encompassing the stand, intently listening to music or oratory and therefore impatient of any interruption, the common right of unobstructed passage will be restricted if not wholly destroyed. Other situations can be found, more appropriate, equally eligible, and liable to no objection, which may suffice until the removal of the Meeting House of the First Parish shall afford a location which will fulfill every requirement.

The attention of the community has been invited, through the columns of the public press, to the question,—“does Illuminating Gas injure trees?” Some statements of the correspondent would seem, by implication, to impute neglect to this Commission. It must suffice, therefore, to say that no occasion has arisen, during the past year, to cause any reclamations upon the Gas Light Company for injury to the Shade Trees of the City. That the gas commonly used for the pur-



poses of illumination, is a specific poison to vegetation, when liberated in the atmosphere or the soil, is pretty conclusively disproved. But that this product of the distillation of coal, imperfectly purified at the best, is and becomes noxious to vegetable growth, under a concurrence of propitious circumstances, has long been an established fact. A notable illustration was afforded by the simultaneous fracture of the gas and water pipes, in Bowdoin street, some years since, when the flushing of the former by the latter constrained the exhaustion, by pumps, of an unwholesome viscous fluid, which, alike gummy and pestiferous, clogged the earth and infected the very elements of plant-life. Such instances, however, are so exceptional that they are scarcely to be taken into account when estimating the probable duration of a tree. Heat, reflected from casual or incendiary fires, infrequent as even they are, is a much more fatal evil.

The felling of that ancient tree, at the foot of Elm street, which had sheltered so many generations beneath its protecting branches, afforded an occasion, at the time, for much sentimental reproach. A little reflection would have disclosed the fact that there were those upon this Commission to whom the least twig of that venerable tree was fraught with tenderer memories than the entire ruck of indiscriminate censors could possibly appreciate. Permission for its eradication was given, upon the application of the Highway Commissioner, with the advice and approval of the late Mayor. The Commissioners are thoroughly satisfied with the result of an act, the responsibility for which is exclusively their own. And they felicitate the community upon the marked improvements which have followed and which were rendered possible of accomplishment only by such decided action. Trees were made for man : not man for trees. Yet too many still stand, spared because of lingering associations, or on account of their age and massive proportions, whose removal would be a great public accommodation and appease an increasing popular demand. The wayfarer, upon Chestnut street, cannot go amiss in search for some such, and may have cause to bless his stars should he luckily survive a collision, upon some dark night.



The impossibility of transposing trees, from streets where they exist in too great profusion to others that are almost entirely destitute of them, is greatly to be regretted. Thus, for example, Salem and Portland streets would be materially improved by allowing the sun to shine in upon parlors that are now screened by an almost impenetrable foliage. Human health cannot be preserved in such unnatural obscurity ; while the very trees protest, through withered leaf and decaying limbs, against the stifling proximity. If this,—which is their misfortune and loss, cannot be converted into a gain for South-bridge or Washington streets, it may avail at least to restrain our citizens from exceeding the restrictions of this Commission, when they plant trees in future. Thirty (30) feet is not too great a distance between Maples and is altogether too close for Elms, after they have made a very brief growth.

At the urgent solicitation of many citizens, including members of the City Council, forty-three (43) new Seats have been placed upon the Common. These, with those already in position, have received two coats of paint, besides frequent incisions from ready jack-knives. Ten (10) Posts have also been set at the entrances on Main, Park, and Salem streets ; new panels put in the Fence where gaps existed ; and all have been painted.

The work done on Elm Park has consisted in temporary repairs of the Fence and Gates inclosing the same ; the location and erection of twenty-two (22) Seats, covering them with two coats of paint ; and then leaving them for mutilation by idlers who are never so happy as when engaged in the perpetration of wanton mischief. By the original indenture, from which the title to Elm Park is derived, the City is bound to assume one-half of the cost of maintaining the Division-Fence upon the hill on the Western side. The condition of the present Fence is such that it will speedily require renewal. This need not involve great expense, as all that is indispensable is a barrier adequate to restrain cattle. Some repairs which could not be postponed were completed towards the close of the last autumn. Early in the Spring of 1870 a Petition was presented to the City Council, from this Commission, praying that the Piedmont network of Sewers might be so far extended as to facilitate the

drainage of Elm Park. That Petition was referred to the appropriate committee, and, although no official reply was ever vouchsafed, it was ascertained by the Chairman of this Commission, in conversation with the late Mayor, that immediate action was deemed inexpedient. Had the decision been favorable, it was designed to excavate as much of the lowest depression in that tract of land so as to admit of its immersion and conversion into an ORNAMENTAL WATER, which would also furnish a convenient and secure skating-pond for the fast multiplying children of the vicinity. That this plan is eminently practicable was never doubted by those familiar with the premises from boyhood. The unprecedented Drought of last Summer demonstrated its feasibility beyond cavil. For at no time was there a lack of water, although of course its amount varied greatly during the season. But until a connection can be effected with the Public Sewer, it will be impossible to accomplish the designs of the Commission, since the ground, when wet, is too soft to be worked. Ultimate advantage may result from the delay, should drainage of the Park be finally effected through a Sewer in Cedar street, prolonged from Sever street, as recently located by the City Council, through land of Gen. W. S. Lincoln, thereby intercepting a natural and obvious outlet ; or else through William street, extended as that street must be, at no remote date, across the tract of the Agricultural Society.

The legacy of the late Governor Lincoln, remains unexpended. As it could not be expended judiciously, for its specific object, it was deemed better to leave it intact in the public treasury. But it is respectfully submitted whether the city, holding the relation of a trustee, should not pay interest upon a fund for which it has found convenient use.

It is matter for profound regret, with the Commissioners, that they can hold out such slight prospects, to the present generation, of any material improvement in the appearance and condition of the Public Grounds. They do not even feel particularly sanguine of preserving them from actual deterioration. Certainly not, unless their complaints of reckless or willful mischief receive more attention from those who should

anticipate or prevent offence, instead of turning an indifferent and listless ear to tales of its commission. Confident that the justice of their fellow-citizens would acquit them of inaction, when cognizant of the fact that there were no means with which to do, the Commissioners have submitted in silence to comments upon their alleged short-comings. As it is, they can but fret themselves with schemes of whose accomplishment they are hopeless. So far as the unstinted devotion of labor and time may achieve anything, it has been cheerfully bestowed in the past: nor can more be promised for the future.

It is their unanimous opinion that the city does not now, nor will it hereafter, require the possession and use of large tracts of land for Public Commons or Parks. Those now in rude occupation are amply sufficient for the Training Field, the Brazen Band, (our modern *panem et circenses*,) and the travelling Giraffe and Monkeys. Idle loungers, with no other object than the aimless consumption of time, may demand a Hyde Park or Bois de Boulogne. Nevertheless, beauty is not necessarily alien or a foe to utility. The broad Boulevards that encircle the fair city upon the banks of the Seine, contribute largely to the facilities of intercourse and traffic. A similar AVENUE, encompassing our own Worcester, would contribute more to the developement of the whole city, in the judgment of this Commission, than any other project that has been devised or consummated for years. The farm takes precedence of the shop; and yet, while no sum can be too great to lavish upon the intricate network of alleys, courts and streets which separate the centre and heart of the Municipality into infinitesimal subdivisions, every dollar is grudged that is required to promote the convenience of those without whose toil man could not live. The farm and its produce are indispensable; the middleman and his store are not absolute necessities. Whatever, then, has a tendency to open up the surrounding country; to develop its natural charms; and to encourage settlement and cultivation where now the bramble and the woodchuck hold undisputed possession; substituting smooth lawns, neat gardens, and improved stock; inducing the street loafer to become the independant yeoman, and attracting, by

the simple aspect of rural loveliness the permanent sojourn of the chance wayfarer ; surely here, and in all this, is an object worth striving for, worth far more, in fact, than even current extravagance could possibly make it cost in realization. With such an Avenue constructed, there would be an amount of intercommunication of the extremities of the city, as of the outlying but adjacent towns, that would astonish those whose ocular mote is Main street. That great artery of business would be relieved of much needless yet serious incumbrance : a relief which, attempted in season, can be both cheaply and prudently afforded. As it is now, from Holden to Leicester, from Paxton to Shrewsbury, everything must pass through our one great thoroughfare, wearing out our pavements, impeding our local traffic, laming beasts used for traction and scaring into disease animals destined for consumption. All these annoyances and evils would be obviated ; all those benefits and more would be derived from the construction of the Avenue suggested. So broad as to admit of adequate and grateful shade to ample footpaths ; so thoroughly built as to be proof alike against autumnal frost or vernal flood ; a convenience for the loaded team and an attraction for the pleasure carriage ; wooing occupation of hundreds of charming dells and nooks by its ruthless exposure of rustic beauty, thereby benefiting individuals and augmenting the general valuation ; a measure which commends itself in proportion as it is considered : one which this Commission will advocate in season and out of season, living or dying, in the hope and faith of its ultimate consummation.

The plan and completion of such Avenue, plainly outlined to this Commission as it has long been, would of course be a work of time. It would aim to take advantage of existing roads, whenever practicable ; widening them to an inflexible uniform limit ; straightening their course here and introducing sweeping curves there ; following the general trend of the foothills whose lines of circumvallation describe an irregular quadrilateral, whereof the Military Academy and the City Farm, the Quinsigamond Iron Works and the Davis Cottage should

constitute the salient and re-entering angles, Coe's Reservoir and the Lake the *points d'appui et resistance*.

Above all — as indispensable to the completion and symmetry of the design, LAKE QUINSIGAMOND should be embraced within its scope. The eye of covetousness already glances at that beautiful sheet of water. It may be that the people of Worcester will consent to hold the fairest ornament of their city at the will, or upon sufferance, of the capital : but it is not believed that such tame acquiescence will be prompted by any one who has the wit to foresee, in a utilitarian sense only, the advantages that would follow upon its undisputed control. The opinion of the Commissioners is decided that the city of Worcester should obtain, from the Great and General Court, power to occupy and possess Lake Quinsigamond, for the purposes of a PUBLIC PARK, without prejudice to the rights of riparian owners, whatever they may be. In this way, if in no other, could the level of its waters be maintained at their average height, thus preserving the smooth and verdant banks which so much enhance its beauty. Nor can any other method be devised, half as effectual, of forestalling future attempts to divert the water of the Lake for the supply of metropolitan thriftlessness and waste.

The recent purchase by the Trustees of the State Lunatic Hospital affords ample and gratifying assurance that the deforesting and devastation of a large portion of the western shore will be permanently and effectually prevented. If the City could acquire detached tracts of a few acres each, abutting upon the proposed Avenue yet contiguous to the Lake, thereby establishing itself a riparian proprietor, it would do more for the welfare of its present increasing, and prospective multitudes, than could be achieved by the costly ownership and maintenance of a score of tangled wildernesses of unused pathway, greenery and thickets. Once committed to the execution of this project, the only one practicable for the immediate as well as ultimate convenience and adornment of the City, and it might not be found necessary to decline the munificent proffer of lands by their generous owners. And then, with the whole scheme fully accomplished ; with the Water-

Park, the consummate masterpiece of nature, and the broad and shaded avenue, the perfected work of man; each the complement of the other; our fair city, not unmindful of its other manifold beauties, but exultant in these because the result of its later and maturer development, may safely anticipate the reward which is surely theirs who, enjoying advantages magnify them, and appreciating opportunities improve them.

Painting, Sculpture and the Groves of the Academy attracted the man of letters and the cunning artisan to ancient Athens. But the mass of her population were plunged in ignorance and fettered by a slavery which admitted of no mitigation: while, to bedeck herself with beauty, the classic city converted to her own use the common treasure contributed, by her Grecian sisters, for defence from the barbarian. Let not the lessons of History, teaching that Liberty was ever the parent of a purer and nobler Art, be lost upon us. For, as much as Athens surpassed Sparta and Thebes in intellectual culture, or material developement, so much and more did Florence and the Free Mediaeval cities, eclipse their Grecian prototypes aesthetically, and in those mechanical arts which tend so strongly toward the promotion of the general welfare. A wider interval separates us. We have no resources to expend, for purposes of civic endowment, save only those derived from self-imposed Taxation. Despotism may renovate the capitals of Europe; but it is the personal privilege of this generation of Americans, finding their cities of wood, to leave them of marble. Nature has omitted nothing from the perfect design of Worcester. Land and Water-scapes; smiling valleys, here terminating suddenly in symmetrical hills and again receding to where a gently-sloping eminence unites and crowns the lines of distant perspective; babbling brooks, and shrubby copses but too rapidly disappearing; shall we incur the forfeiture of her charms by our neglect to unveil them?

These considerations have been presented at unreasonable length, doubtless; but a faithful discharge of duty permits no alternative. They are the fruit of personal inspection of

localities, frequently and thoroughly examined, in that best of all methods—on foot; and, as such, are submitted for popular approval or rejection. The construction of the Avenue and the acquisition of the Water-Park, may not be accomplished. But the entire plan is so feasible; its realization would so ensure to the public utility and general comfort, if gradually and therefore economically perfected; that the acknowledged good taste of the community must appreciate its countless prospective advantages and beauties, even though it deny itself their enjoyment.

All which is Respectfully Submitted,

for and in behalf of the Commission, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

Chairman.





No. 187 / Quissing ✓



















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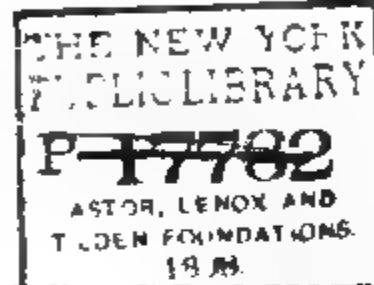




*My dear  
William S. B.*

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE



# COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

OF THE

# CITY OF WORCESTER.

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING JANUARY 1, 1872.

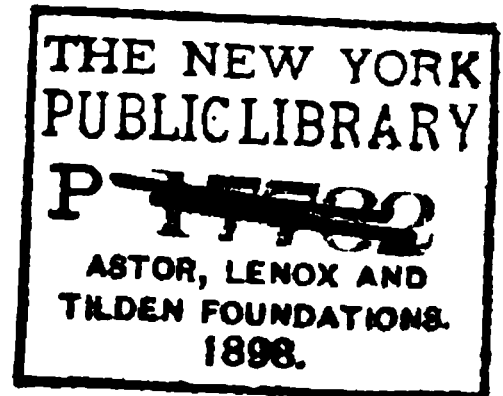
WORCESTER:

PRINTED BY EDWARD R. FISKE, CROMPTON'S BLOCK.  
1872.



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W. B. F.





# REPORT

## OF THE

### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable City Council:*

By Section 21, of the Revised Charter of Worcester, the *City Council* is authorized to elect a board of three commissioners, whose powers and duties are defined at length. Section 1, of Chapter 8, of the Municipal Ordinances, establishes the official designation of those officers, providing as it does for the election, annually, in the month of January, of a “*Commissioner of Public Grounds.*” Having premised thus much, for the sake of brevity in their future communications and intercourse with the *Honorable Council*, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS (and *not* of Shade Trees *and* Public Grounds!) would most respectfully submit the accompanying “Report of all their acts and doings, and of the condition of the public grounds and shade and ornamental trees thereon, and on said streets and highways and an account of receipts and expenditures for the same,” for the financial year ending November 30, A. D. 1871.

The receipts of the Commission, from all sources, were as follows:

<i>Balance</i> On Hand January 2. A. D. 1871.	\$1,048 88
Appropriation for 1872.	5,000 00
Use of Elm Park by menageries, &c.,	350 00
For removal of 500 yards Gravel, (Salem St.)	150 00
M. McGrath, Grass on Elm Park.	200 00
	<hr/>
	\$6,748 88

## REPORT OF COMMISSION

## PER CONTRA—EXPENDITURES.

Paid H. & A. Palmer, labor and boxing trees (bill of 1870.)	\$121 92
Highway Department, Plowing, Labor and Street Scrapings,	275 10
Sewer Department—Constructing Inlets, Catch-basins, &c,	250 89
M. McGrath, labor during Five months, Excavation, &c.,	
as per Report,	3,976 22
M. McGrath, Excavation, Labor and Manure on Elm Park,	199 50
John Barnes, Felling trees, labor and hire of team,	238 33
Timothy S. Bliss, Plowing S. W. corner of Elm Park,	4 12
A. Barnes, labor,	16 00
John Goulding, labor,	15 00
M. McKenney, labor,	6 00
Jere Toomey, do	21 50
Henry Forney, Trimming trees,	27 00
C. H. Perry, “ “ and Fencing,	180 82
L. B. Chambelain, Setting trees (Bellevue St,)	5 00
Jonas Hartshorn, (Chandler St,)	12 00
S. Shumway, (Woodland St,)	5 00
Charles E. Stevens, (Boynton St,)	2 00
James H. Wall, (Elm St,)	5 00
James Draper, for Fifteen Hundred Young Trees,	
(Elms and Maples,) and setting same,	98 00
George Sessions & Son, 350 yards of earth at 12½ cts,	43 77
John Simmons & Son, Lumber and Boxing trees,	133 83
Willard Ward, labor and lumber,	123 64
Mann & Bigelow, stone and labor	53 50
C. O. Richardson, 58 Tons of Beach Stone at \$4.00 per	
ton, \$232.00; Freight, \$72.50	304 00
L. H. Bigelow, Directory, Envelopes &c,	2 00
S. Harrington. Labor,	30 00
A. Ballou, Painting,	34 83
Dexter Rice, Signs,	22 75
J. D. Baldwin & Co, Advertising,	1 50
*S. D. Burbank, Burying Anaconda (Elm Park),	2 00
J. D. Lovell, Grass Seed for Common and Elm Park, and tools,	86 42
J. Marble & Co.. Tar for Irons of Flag-Staff,	1 25
Sumner Pratt & Co., Guide line,	1 30
Snow Brothers, Printing Report for 1870, (Extra Copies).	23 32
	<hr/>
	\$6,324 01
Remaining unexpended	\$424 87

There are some bills for trimming and boxing Trees, and other work, not presented, that will reduce if not extinguish this balance.

\*Note.—Upon the departure of the “Grand Moral” Caravan of P. T. Barnum it was found that an Anaconda had “shuffled off its mortal coil” and been left behind among other hallowing influences. It required Two Dollars and a pretty tough stomach to deodorize the neighborhood. The interment, behind the Old Gun House, of a “Captator Verborum,” who fell a victim to a bad access of grammar, being a labor of love, was devoid of expense to the treasury. In neither instance has there been subsequent offence, although, in one case, the stench was overpowering before burial; and, in the other, de-composition had become noisome.

The following enumerated work has been executed during the year, under the direction of the Commission. Forty-five (45) trees were protected with perpendicular slats. Seventeen (17) Circular Guards, with iron bands, have been allowed (in part) by the Commission and, in addition, One Hundred and Fifteen (115) common guards. Sixteen new posts have been affixed to seats in place of others that were rotten.

The property belonging to the Commission and fit for use is thus reported: Thirteen (13) seats; five (old) tree-guards; ten (10) new do: Fifty (50) slats for trees: Three Hundred and Fifty (350) Pickets, which will make Seven Hundred (700) slats; and Nine Circular Guards. There are also on hand Fifty-Eight (58) Tons of Beach-Stones, which will be used in paving gutters when the condition of the ground will admit of it. Quite a number of neat signs that had been put in position upon the Common, warning people "off the grass" are missing and were undoubtedly stolen. There is as yet no clue to the thief. Suspicion justly attaches to a stranger who betrayed remarkable interest in them and whose departure from the city was singularly coincident with the disappearance of those signs. Such forms of lunacy are usually harmless, however, beyond the loss consequent upon their manifestation; and no increase of the police force is recommended should there be a re-appearance of the same or similar depredators.

In the Report of the Commission for 1870, occurs the following paragraph:

"This Commission holds a very definite opinion of what should be done to render the Common attractive and ornamental; as it emphatically is neither at present. But it is not deemed expedient to ask appropriations for the decoration of an irregular and imperfect fraction, when measures have been initiated by the People to free the whole from incumbrance."

It is scarcely worth the while to explain the reasons by which the Commissioners were induced to change the policy thus indicated. Perhaps as decisive as any were the sneers indulged in by the sagacious counsel for the Railway Corporations, in the "Hearing" before the Railway Committee of the General Court. If it was true, as alleged, that, "aside from the railroads, from the dilapidated fence which encloses it, and all the surroundings of that Common, you will know by a single glance that it is not the resort of our citizens who would like a Park or Common for

use," it seemed to this Commission high time that the desolation of this Public Ground should no longer supply an argument against its improvement to Ex-Mayors, of the legal profession, by whom it had been chiefly neglected. And, although the failure of their "uncultivated country eyes" to "appreciate the beauties of Worcester Common," as admitted by the blatant advocates from Fitchburg Ravine, might be largely due to their inability to discover an "*itching palm*" among our Flora, of which so conspicuous a specimen is supplied by their egregious Town (e), yet it behooved this Commission all the more to remedy deficiencies confessed by none so readily as themselves. For, be that COMMON what it might, it was none the less precious for the reminiscences that it awakened and for the hopes which it inspired. It was small,—more's the pity! yet such taunt came with an ill grace from those who had encroached upon its limits. Its appearance was forlorn enough, undoubtedly, but to whom was its bare and sterile aspect more attributable than to those who grudged all sums expended in its improvement, esteeming the devotion of a cent to plans of civic embellishment as an aggravated personal robbery! The Commissioners had never lacked a keen perception of their duty in the premises: to that consciousness was now superadded a lively sense that the work of reclamation might no longer be postponed.

Accordingly, by way of experiment and almost exclusively as a tentative measure, the task of filling the acute triangle or delta, at the N. E. corner, was commenced. The material employed, and indeed the only one then available, was the scrapings from the public streets, of which the Highway Department was glad enough to be rid so handily. The capacity of that tract of land to swallow up dirt was the wonder of the Commission, which beheld the entire municipal force of men and teams severely tasked to establish even a tolerable grade. When the exhaustion of material at length constrained a pause, the enforced cessation of work was found to be rather a benefit than a misfortune. Since, with the first soaking rains, it quickly became apparent that the material used was not of sufficient specific gravity to maintain a definite and fixed level; for which purpose as well as to fit it for the sustenance of a dense and sightly herbage, it would require to be mixed with richer and heavier soil. A small

lot of loam was procured for a top dressing, but the quantity was altogether inadequate to modify essentially the nature of the whole deposit. It still remained of an arid, heating character by no means favorable to the nutrition of the choicer grasses. A thorough conviction of this, however, was not reached until later in the season, when the progress of improvement, in other portions of the Common, had advanced to a degree which would admit of neither intermission nor delay. The tract had been thickly seeded, at the earliest moment practicable, and a speedy growth of tender herbage offered its pleasant verdure in exchange for a dreary waste. The frosts and snows of winter could be safely depended upon to settle the mass well together, if not to reduce it to a homogeneous whole. It was thought best therefore, to postpone, until the ensuing Spring, the final grading of that tract for which, meanwhile, material was steadily accumulated.

Encouraged by the evident success of this attempt, it was resolved to defer the work of improvement no longer, but to commence and complete at once what must, sooner or later, be undertaken. As the execution of this purpose involved the expenditure of considerable sums of money, it was deemed alike prudent and courteous to secure the co-operation of the *City Council*, by which body all appropriations must be made. The following Resolution was therefore submitted for the consideration of the members and, upon the 3d of April, A. D. 1871, it received the unanimous assent of both branches :

“ *Resolved*,—that the CITY COUNCIL assures the Commissioners of their cordial co-operation in any effort for the improvement of the Common, and to that end will appropriate such necessary means and facilities as shall promise the most efficient and rapid execution of the work consistent with a judicious economy.”

While these preliminaries were in process of arrangement, Mr. Anthony Chase signified to the Commission his willingness that earth should be taken from the high bank lying west of Main Street, where his residence was formerly situated. No more timely, and certainly no greater, assistance could have been offered than this ; not only on account of the quantity of material, but because of its proximity and facilities for excavation. The proposal of Mr. Chase was at once thankfully accepted. A bargain was made with Mr. Michael McGrath by which, for the sum of twenty (20) cents per square yard, he engaged to dig and

convey said earth to the Common. Work was begun on the 13th day of April and continued steadily, without interruption save from the weather until the 7th day of August. Large and almost inexhaustible as that bank of dirt had appeared to the casual observer, it soon became evident that it would prove inadequate for the wants of the Common. Four Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Six (4136) yards were obtained from it before it finally succumbed to the pick and shovel. Six Hundred and Nine (609) yards were subsequently procured from a lot of Mr. Chase, upon High Street and One Hundred and Ninety-Four (194) yards from still another lot, of the same gentleman, upon Chatham Street; all being excavated upon similar terms. It has been complained, by the querulous gossips of the streets and by their congeners, the snarling tattlers of corner paint shops, that Mr. Chase derived incidental benefit from the operation. Such is doubtless the fact; and it is one that is very gratifying to this Commission which can conceive of an honorable transaction, between two parties, resulting in mutual advantage and of no possible detriment to either. But even this accumulation was insufficient. Nor was it until after the deposit of Four Hundred and Thirty-Five (435) yards, from the new cellar of White & Conant, upon Main Street, at an expense of fourteen (14) cents per yard; and of Three Hundred and Fifty (350) yards, furnished by Mr. George Sessions, costing Twelve and one-half cents ( $12\frac{1}{2}$ ) per, yard, that the task of filling that yawning hollow gave token of accomplishment. Even then, small lots of good soil were made use of, as they could be obtained, to supply deficiencies in spots which seemed to demand unusual care to remedy their natural barrenness. In addition to all this, a large amount of loam was required for top-dressing; the hard-pan or clay, of which the bulk of the filling consisted, affording but poor encouragement for grass-seed. Thanks are due to Dr. Henry Clarke, who allowed the Commission to take a great quantity of quite rich dirt from the cellar of an old stable upon Waldo street, without which the labor of preparing a considerable portion of the ground could not have been completed. One hundred and Twelve (112) cords of fine loam were also obtained from the estate of the late John C. Ripley, at a cost but slightly exceeding Seventy-Five (75) cents per cord. Nor must credit

be omitted for the generosity of Mr. H. H. Houghton who, besides his constant encouragement during the progress of the work, permitted the gravel with which almost all the walks were built and without which their construction would have been impracticable save at greatly enhanced expense and trouble, to be taken from the cellar of his new block of buildings upon Salem Street. Aid of a similar nature, extended by Col. Levi Barker is also gratefully remembered and acknowledged. Indeed, there was scarcely an exception to the general desire and effort to promote, in all possible ways, the accomplishment of a work which, as was the concurrent opinion, had been too long delayed.

At the outset, it was not contemplated to do more than bring up to their proper level those portions of the Common that abut upon the South line of Front Street. But as the work advanced, and as the alteration wrought in the appearance of the grounds by the mere change of grade became clearly manifest, there was scarcely a dissentient from the appeal to the Commission to push on with the task to its completion. Sustained as this appeal was by the members of the City Council, with more or less of whom almost daily conferences were held, it influenced the final adoption of a resolve to finish the work. And the task was accomplished just as the last load of available material, required for its successful achievement, was exhausted.

During this whole time, the Foot-Paths, or Walks, had to be reconstructed, and that too with as little hindrance to public passage as possible. In nearly every instance, the allotted space was first ploughed and then shoveled out to a depth of about two feet, the bottom of the trench being crowded full with coarse stones that were found in the hard-pan and of which there was always a sufficiency. Over these was placed a layer of pebbles, covered in its turn with rough, and thereafter screened, gravel. Repeated rolling yielded a firm surface, although the excessive drought during the progress of this part of the work was a great hindrance to success. The walks will require careful repair, and renovation where washed, in the Spring, to make them pleasant for pedestrians. But they can never be made permanently dry until after the construction of a sewer across the Common, beneath the present short-lived location of the Railways. Into that sewer should be made to empty all the gutters that course



along-side the Western and Central Foot-Paths and by it also must be drained the spot that will have to be selected for the permanent position of the Soldiers' Monument. For the gutters themselves, it will be absolutely essential that they should be paved, with a view to economy as well as neatness. That such an edging to the walks, besides protecting them from abrasion by every rain fall, may also be ornamental, a small cargo, consisting of Fifty-Eight (58) tons of small Beach-Stones, has been procured, at a total cost, (including \$72.50 for railway tolls,) of Three Hundred and Four and one-half Dollars, (\$304.50.) With these it has been computed that several hundred yards of gutters can be paved, narrow but of sufficient width for utility, and long enough to test the question of their cheapness. Too much pains cannot be taken to render the Foot-Paths dry. By this, it is not meant that they should be impervious to water, which would not be desirable, but merely that they shall absorb moisture rapidly, or otherwise be relieved from excess of Summer showers. There was not sufficient time, in the working season of 1871, to complete this part of the task as thoroughly as could be desired. It is hoped, however, in the early Spring, to profit by the experience of the Winter which, with its alternations of frost and thaw, is a thorough if somewhat radical leveller. When the walks shall have been elevated to their proposed height in the centre, thereby rendering them crowning instead of, as now, depressed by myriad feet; and shall, at the same time, be effectually freed from superfluous water; the greatest source of anxiety to the Commission will have been entirely removed.

During the progress of the work upon the Northern Path, it became necessary to settle upon the proper disposition to be made of the ancient Well that has so long and faithfully ministered to the popular necessities. The evidence was irresistible that the Well could not be dispensed with, being in use, as conclusively shown, throughout the twenty-four hours. A thorough cleansing was therefore ordered, a dense mass of fibre being removed which had been attracted from the roots of the adjacent Elms by the proximity of moisture. A huge stone was placed over the top, its edge being dressed to a level with the surrounding pathway. In the judgment of this Commission, such jobs are done cheapest when done so as to last. It is not doubted that



the dwellers in the vicinity will be lulled to their virtuous slumbers, for many a year to come, by the music of that pump-handle.

Upon application from this Commission, three (3) Inlets to the Front Street Sewer, with their accompanying and indispensable Catch-Basins, were constructed by the Department of Sewers, at a total cost of Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars and Eighty Nine cents (\$250.89). The original intention was, to collect the entire surface drainage of the Common and discharge it, through appropriate channels, into these Inlets. But it will doubtless be found expedient to divert a part of that overflow to the main Sewer or Drain, which, as heretofore intimated, will be required for the Westerly side of the Common, including the site for the foundation of the Soldiers' Monument, the stability of which must not be left in question for a moment. The general grade of the whole tract is such, nevertheless, that the surface-water can be directed, until shorter courses are offered, into the Inlets to the Front Street Sewer. Especially is such the fact in regard to the rainfall upon the *Knoll* before which, "full high advanced," the Bigelow Monument discloses its graceful proportions.

The proper treatment of that *Knoll* occasioned as much, if not more embarrassment than any other problem which was presented for solution. A thicket of unsightly trees had been suffered to grow up, receiving no other care than the occasional pruning of a limb that had first been fractured by nature in rough but effectual fashion. Scarcely one of those trees, by itself, was worth saving. Had the Commission felt free to disregard all other considerations, consulting only the requirements of a correct taste, not a tree would have been spared which interfered with the plan of reducing the *Knoll* to the level of the Southern Plateau, continuing the Northerly grade, by an easy descent, until it was merged in the walk at its base. But it was not deemed prudent, strongly as it commended itself to the judgment, to make such thorough destruction. Few were marked for preservation, however, that did not give promise of future symmetry under the unwonted influence of air and sunlight to which they would for the first time, be directly exposed. Some that still remain are standing, merely because they were not expected to survive the winter and their removal could be conveniently deferred.

The plan of improvement, devised and so far executed, by the Commission, will be incomplete until after the construction of a FOUNTAIN or, more strictly, JET D'EAU. No City, within knowledge, enjoys equal facilities for the production of an imposing effect of this nature. A survey has already been made and the stakes are set, denoting the intended location of an Octagonal Basin, twenty feet in diameter, which is precisely one-half of the contemplated size. The finest display will be produced by a hollow column, thrown in a single, perpendicular jet to any height desirable so long as the falling spray shall be restricted to proper limits. It is believed that water enough could be spared to permit the play of the Jet upon Holidays, when it would, of itself, furnish an extraordinary attraction for the multitudes who throng our streets in search of amusement. In no other way can the City as cheaply supply so much innocent gratification. Sums, largely exceeding the utmost expense estimated by the Commission, were appropriated without grudging, in former years for evanescent shows of Fireworks. This simple, unadorned JET is within the plan of work which should be completed during the season that is rapidly approaching. A Fountain might be introduced, for ordinary occasions, in exact conformity to the original design, the spent waters of which, when played, should be conducted to the intersection of Salem Square with Front Street, at the North-East corner of the Common, there to supply a much needed convenience wherefrom the tired wayfarer and his animals may quench their thirst. No waste would then be possible of the invaluable element that has cost so much to introduce and diffuse, but which cannot be in too lavish abundance for every legitimate purpose.

The Commissioners have been led, through paragraphs in the public press as well as from informal communications to their Chairman, to expect that the eager co-operation of a portion of their fellow citizens would take the form of the contribution of a sum of money towards the construction of the proposed JET D'EAU. Such intention, if entertained seriously, appears to have been abandoned. But, as one of the earliest and most prominent features of their original plan of improvement; one indeed which could not be omitted without relinquishing every pretension to true adornment, it has not been as it never will be surrendered

by this Commission. There would seem to be a propriety in some voluntary contribution by the owners of Real Estate, abutting upon or contiguous to the Common, which has been and must continue to be so largely benefited by the permanent improvement of that Public Ground, towards a method of ornamentation from which they will derive the chief delight. A timely opportunity will be afforded for the manifestation, in a substantial shape, of that liberality which is doubtless eager to be solicited. At the same time it will not be regarded as any evidence of needless extravagance, should the munificence of our fellow citizens, living remote from the Common, display a tendency in this direction.

No interchange of views has been had, as yet, between the committee to which is entrusted the erection of a Soldier's Monument and this Commission. Whensoever it shall appear to that committee that the time has arrived for the definitive assignment of a site, assuming that one will be sought upon the Common, this Commission will be prepared to entertain the subject with a cordial desire for efficient, mutual co-operation. There can scarcely be two opinions as to the precise spot to be preferred; among the Commissioners, most assuredly, there is entire harmony upon that point as upon all others. The City Council has already taken action, upon the Memorial of this Commission, to secure the removal of the Meeting-House of the First Parish, so long occupied for Town-Meetings. That the Petition of the City will be granted, by the Legislature of the Commonwealth, can no more be doubted than the undeniable fact that its Prayer is but an echo of the wishes of five-sixths of our population. The utter removal of that Meeting-House will relieve the Common from an awkward and unsightly incumbrance, of which no amount of hired advocacy can justify the continued retention. The design for the improvement of the Common has always contemplated the possibility of the construction of a Soldiers' Monument: and no change will be required in the general disposition of the grounds, by that possibility becoming a certainty. When the whole shall be completed; the Monument in position and the grounds immediately surrounding suitably graded and laid out; our citizens will have additional cause for felicitation at the emphasis with which they rejected the scheme, having nothing

but its audacity in its favor, of rearing upon the Common a pile of Granite as ugly as it would have been absurd:—

*“ Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens.”*

In closing this review and summary of the work upon the Common, during the past year, it is but fair to insist for a moment upon a consideration of the neglect under which that Public Ground, in the very heart of our City, has been allowed to languish. The theme for reproach at home and the butt of ridicule to the traveller as he was borne swiftly by over street or Railway; who shall measure the amount of injury which the sight of such municipal shiftlessness and unthrift has occasioned? As we suffered the public property to go to waste, why might not the suspicion justly lurk that we were individually incapable of economical or discreet conduct! In essaying a remedy for the mismanagement, or neglect, of former years, the aim of the Commission has been so to execute the trust confided that the work should not require repetition. Apportion all the sums that even extravagance could squander, much more the actual or intended modest expenditure of the Commission, throughout the countless years during which nothing was attempted; and the cost of reclamation sinks into the very absurdity of insignificance. The People, always apathetic and usually indulgent to those whom they can induce to govern them, sharply aroused by recent developments in more than one State of the Republic, peremptorily insist upon economy in every municipal department. But the distinction between prudent thrift and a griping penuriousness is kept closely defined. And, among the monuments to their Civic Idols which they may erect, it is very certain that no Golden Calf will perpetuate the worship of the Official Skinflint.

Late in the summer a favorable opportunity presented itself and was at once improved, to determine a question which had been the source of much solicitude to this Commission. It was important, with a view to ultimate future operations, to know upon what foundation the bed of peat, in Elm Park, rested and at what depth that foundation must be sought. Taking advantage of the existing drought, excavations were commenced and steadily prosecuted until all further progress was arrested by a copious rain. Enough was accomplished, to prove that the mass of peat is underlain at an average depth of four (4) feet, by a layer or bed of sand,

of a grit so fine as to be impalpable and of tenacity like well moulded putty. This subsoil differed, in no material particular, from that upon which the Sever street sewer is built, and it evidently belongs to the same formation. The discovery of that arenaceous deposit, no farther from the surface, assured the Commission of the entire practicability of forming the Pond or Ornamental Water, which has always been pictured to the imagination as the greatest charm of that Park when completed. It will however be impossible to execute any such design, as it would not be advisable even to make the attempt, until the drainage of the entire tract of land can be so controlled that its discharge may be regulated at will. A single shower was sufficiently copious to put a summary stop to operations, last autumn, by flooding the excavation. When the surface water can be drawn off, so that labor may be continued without interruption, there now appears to be no insuperable obstacle to the formation of an Ornamental Water that shall please in Summer and be not wholly without attraction in Winter. For the thanks of many a young lad and lass have been showered profusely upon the Commission in gratitude for even what little has thus far been effected to promote their enjoyment. The excavation of a suitable basin, not too deep for safety, will afford a much needed chance for cheerful and exhilarating exercise, upon sled and skate, to a multitude of children who, being born, have claims upon the world that begat them. Clay enough can be obtained, for puddling the bottom of such basin, from the side of the adjacent hill, whose eastern slopes have been rent and gashed by many and lawless, even if municipal, depredations. Those slopes indeed, require to be pared down, dressed to uniformity of outline, and sown thickly with congenial grass seed. It will be the good fortune of the Commission, if here, as elsewhere, the execution of what may well be done shall be instrumental towards the completion of that which is indispensable.

But a connection with the sewers of the city is a pre-requisite, without which little of a satisfactory nature can be achieved. The water in the pool, at Elm Park, on the fourth day of January, current, stood upon a level with the crown of Agricultural street. This is an evil which will go on increasing with every spadeful of dirt that goes to uplift the average grade of the Park.

Even nature will contribute to this overflow, in her silent but sure processes of filling up valleys by the abrasion of uplands and by deposits from decaying vegetation. In the judgment of this Commission, the time for action in the premises, by the City Government, cannot be postponed any longer. The construction of a sewer through Russell street and thence-forward along a portion of Elm or Agricultural streets, would be but the anticipation of a work that cannot, in any event, be neglected. It is believed that nothing but the character of the soil prevents the exhalations from the lowlands contiguous to the Park becoming a pestilential nuisance. Suffer the *excreta* of a rapidly increasing population to saturate it, and even the deodorizing and disinfecting properties of peat will not avail to preserve the health of the vicinage. It would appear to be the part of a far-sighted and discreet administration to fit the land for human habitation, in advance of settlement, rather than to delay indispensable measures until the decimation of the people sounds an alarm that can no longer pass unheeded. As it is, coterminous proprietors complain, with too much reason, that there is no artificial outlet provided for the waters which, owing to the extreme flatness of the land, are retained upon the surface after every rain: and that all the natural channels of discharge are permanently closed by the public streets.

Some misconception seems to exist concerning the condition of the Legacy bequeathed by the late Hon. Levi Lincoln for the "thorough drainage and improvement" of Elm Park. In the opinion of this Commission, it would not constitute a compliance with the intention of the bequest, to employ it in the construction of a sewer without the boundaries of the Park, beneficial as such sewer might be, even were it competent for the Commission, as such, to meddle with the Public Streets. It will be altogether better to excavate the proposed small basin or pond, directing thither and emptying therein all the underdrains that may be found necessary for the "thorough drainage and improvement" of the Park, comprehending among them, as will probably be essential, one of size sufficient to collect the discharge from the adjacent hill. That such application of this special fund would best fulfil the design of the Legacy, can be confidently assumed by the chairman of this Commission, who well recollects the



commendation at the time bestowed upon an article from his pen, in the columns of the *Spy*, referring to which the Legator remarked that the formation of an open basin or ornamental water would be the greatest improvement that could be developed in the landscape. There is some consolation in knowing that, if immediate benefit is not derived from that fund, the sum of the fund itself, as a trust in the hands of the city, is swelling by the steady accumulation of interest.

The opinion heretofore communicated to the HONORABLE COUNCIL by this Commission, is reiterated, that the city should become proprietor of Newton Hill by purchase ; or, if that is not possible, by virtue of authority to be obtained from the General Court. Its propinquity lends a charm that, in its naturalness, is foreign to other Public Grounds throughout the country ; while its ownership, and consolidation with the Park, would forever prevent its destruction for the sake of the material which is so much needed in the valley that it dominates. If the entire, or even a major part of the water supply of the City is to be derived from Leicester, that hill must be invaluable in the immediate future, as the site for a reservoir which shall hold a temporary store against emergencies and also aid in equalizing the pressure throughout that broad arc in which the western suburbs are comprised and in the chord subtending which it is the most salient feature. There can be no question but what, in the time to come, that Hill will be wanted for some important public use ; whether of an exclusive Municipal nature, or not, is of slight consequence to the argument. Its seasonable possession would ensure the preservation of that symmetry by which the admiration of the casual visitor is so much excited and to which even comparative familiarity has not blunted the sensibilities of the oldest inhabitant. The more speedy its acquisition the greater the economy : since even *upland pasture* will not be likely to depreciate as the march of population closes in upon its base. “ *Bis dat qui cito dat.* ” He gives twice who gives quickly, says the ancient proverb. Celerity of action is the secret of all modern achievement. Now, as of yore, the Sibylline Books are forever lost to the irresolute and timid. Any dolt can call a halt ; but, to advance, demands genius of a high order. The measure recommended by the Commission—the acquisition of Newton Hill and its annexation to

Elm Park,—is advised as *a step forward*. The grasp of the speculator has already closed upon its North Eastern corner. A few years more of indecision,—of doubt as to the present expediency and skepticism as to the ultimate profit,—will probably settle the matter of such acquisition by rendering it impracticable. It may well happen that Posterity, for which our affection is so inordinate that we are willing it should pay our Public Debt, may retort upon us that it would have preferred the lofty Hill “with verdure clad,” to the polluted Sewer, had it been left the option.

The *Shade Trees* of the City, that line the public streets, have received more than ordinary attention. A few have been planted. A very large number were pruned of dead or useless limbs. And still others have been removed entirely, in cases where they threatened to become a serious hindrance to the use and enjoyment of Sidewalks, or already obstructed their establishment. So far as the setting out of new Shade-Trees is concerned, it has not appeared to the Commission to be worth the while to attempt very much. The grade of so many of the Streets is undetermined; the very level of the grade itself is in so few instances thoroughly worked out, even when it has been decreed; that a tree is at any instant liable to the sudden exposure of its roots by the official pickaxe or spade. The wiser policy has been preferred, of acquiring a stock of good, merchantable Trees at a minimum price; allowing them to attain sufficient growth; and then planting them out along such Streets as may be selected, on both sides, throughout their whole length. Adequate space can thus be ensured between each tree, while their relative position can conform to some other requirement than that of direct opposition. Moreover the work can be conducted with partial relation to a system previously adopted. With a view to the reception of a nursery of such trees, a suitable tract of land at the South Western corner of Elm Park, was ploughed in the Spring and well-manured and cultivated during the Summer. It had been designed to set out the young trees in the early Spring: out, owing to delay in their receipt, this was found to be impracticable. Advantage doubtless accrued from a tardiness which, at first, seemed a misfortune, insomuch as the new plantation escaped exposure to the fervent heat and unwonted drought of



July and August. One Thousand (1,000) Maples and Five Hundred (500) Elms are now in the ground prepared for them, having been carefully and well placed there by Mr. James Draper, with whom a bargain had been previously made. With only ordinary good fortune, there can be no reason why a large proportion should not survive and attain maturity. It is the purpose of this Commission to have them properly cared for; transplanted when their rapidity of growth renders it necessary; and ultimately to set them out along the Public Streets, as before stated, or to issue them, in lieu of the present impolitic pecuniary bounty, to persons who will agree to plant them and look out for their future protection.

The following tabular statement will show the number and location of Trees, planted by individuals in A. D., 1871, for which claims were made and allowed by this Commission:—

On Chandler and Tatnuck Streets, Twelve (12) Rock Maples.

On Bellevue Street, Five (5) Maples.

On Providence Street, Eight (8) Elms.

On Boynton Street, Two (2) Maples.

On Woodland Street, Five (5)

On Elm Street, Five (5) Elms.

The planting of quite a number that had been contracted for was prevented by the sudden and unexpected commencement of the present severe Winter.

A great amount of work has been done in pruning existing Trees. The giant Elms on Lincoln Street; those on the terrace at the Southern extremity of Court Hill; and the entire row which so superbly arches Front Street for a little while longer; have been one and all severely trimmed. If, in the opinion of some, too many limbs were here and there taken; the answer must be that it was designed rather to accomplish at once what was required than to spin out the work, to the annoyance of the wayfarer, throughout successive years. Frequent amputations by official highway-men had so reduced the roots of many of those lofty and massive Trees, that their impaired vitality was inadequate to the sustenance of the unrestricted top. It is believed that they will now take a new lease of life and attest, in their own peculiar fashion, that the heroic method of surgery is not necessarily fatal. In every one of these cases, the nourishment, that would have been wasted in useless development, will

be directed to clothing with verdure limbs that are the nett result derived from *artificial selection*.

Public convenience has compelled the removal of quite a number of Trees of unequal value. The necessities of the Highway Department, with which this Commission is brought into close relations, have occasioned the felling of several whose destruction, under less immediate urgency, would furnish a theme for regret. The most signal examples were,—on Front Street, where the widening of the travelled way was incompatible with the continued toleration of the row of Elms lying East of Church Street; and the detached and stately specimens on Chestnut St., between Elm and Pleasant Streets. In this last case, the Commission was unanimous in the opinion that the whole four were very much in the way of pedestrians, upon a most important thoroughfare between several churches, the Post-office, and the homes of a large portion of the community desirous of their summary extirpation. It was decided, however, to take out two at that time, suffering the others to remain for the present. A distinct understanding was had, in the case of the most northerly, that its continued toleration would be contingent upon the execution of a half-formed purpose of Dr. Henry Clarke: and, in that of the other and larger, that the garden-fence of Mr. F. H. Kinnicutt should be retired upon a curve that will compensate for the seven feet of space in the side-walk monopolized by the tree. In most instances, where it was found necessary to remove trees to admit of the setting of curb-stones, their excision was productive of great advantage. Marked examples can be cited;—one upon East Worcester Street, where Eleven (11) Elms were felled, materially benefitting the remainder; and another on Main, between Allen and Benefit Streets, in front of the Orphan's Home, at which point the removal of Twelve (12) Horse Chestnuts left suitable and much-needed room for the fine row of Maples with which they awkwardly alternated. The doom of many a goodly tree, on Lincoln Street, was also sealed by the rapid growth of population and the consequent demand for sidewalks in and about that thriving portion of the Second Ward. In no instance has authority been granted to fell or remove a tree, without it first underwent a personal inspection from the Chairman of the Commission. Had greater

discretion been exhibited in choosing fit locations for the Shade-Trees in our Streets, this Commission would be spared the painful duty of so frequently *grinding its axe*.

The efforts of the Commission to protect the Shade Trees of the City from mutilation have not been attended with the success that could be desired. Somewhat of this ill-fortune must be attributed to thoughtlessness which, reckless of warning or legal provision, persists in using tree-trunks and tree-guards, indiscriminately, as so much gratuitous pasture. In some flagrant cases it is believed that injury might have been prevented, or its agents punished, had not the ministers of the Law held views of their duty widely at variance with those cherished by this Commission. The Police appear to be of opinion that the citizen must detect, and, by sworn testimony, convict an offender; and that to them merely appertains the task of formal arrest, with the final ecstasy of exploring the wonders and participating in the mysteries of that new multiplication table—a Criminal Bill of Costs. The view upheld by this Commission, and cherished by a vast majority of the community, on the contrary, is that officers, even of the Law, should earn their salt; and that the labor should be exacted of those who never fail to be punctual at the Treasury. It is no assumption, to assert that a very imperfect display of vigilance would suppress the mischief in question, although it is not pretended that, by the exercise of such vigilance, the existing standard of proficiency in Draughts and Dominoes might not be sensibly lowered.

During the year which has elapsed since the publication of their last Annual Report, the Commissioners have taken especial note of the welcome accorded to their recommendation of a Boulevard or AVENUE, to environ and also develope the City. Particular gratification was afforded them by the written commendation of their former fellow-townsmen, Hon. Andrew H. Green, whose signal merits have but just obtained fitting recognition, and whose long service as the virtual head of the New York Central Park Commission entitles his opinion to commanding influence. Among their fellow-citizens the reception of the project was unexpectedly favorable. Some, indeed, objected to it as a whole, who yet conceded the wisdom of rendering Lake Quinsigamond more accessible. In a solitary instance, a writer for the press to whose

judgement much deference is ordinarily due and yielded, alleging the cost of the right of way as an insuperable obstacle, advised that any future consideration of the plan be postponed for two hundred years. To this it must suffice to respond that the project of the Commission is intended for the benefit of the very people who shall come into being hereafter and not for their perplexity in its consideration: and that if its adoption is deferred, as suggested, the chance is infinitesimal of its present advocates, by whom its merits are best appreciated, appearing in its behalf. But more momentous than all else is the fact, not doubted by the least sanguine and perspicacious among us, that in less than the life-time of a generation, this Worcester, that within the memory of the writer, has grown from the quiet village in which the arrival of the Boston coach was an event to the city that makes of slight account the bustle of a hundred Railway trains, will transcend the broadest limits that are contemplated for the location of that AVENUE. It is to anticipate such rapid progress;—to provide, in advance, that the Worcester of the coming century shall not have the circulation between its extremities obstructed, as is almost disgracefully the case with the Worcester of to-day;—to insure, so far as may be, the speedy opening and permanent maintenance of at least one wide thoroughfare which shall supply the means of direct intercommunication and easy traffic to, and from, and throughout the suburbs; that this commission declines to earn the meed of the unprofitable servant, “leaving undone that which ought to be done.” That the exact bearing and scope of its recommendation may be clearly appreciated, the following passage from the report of the Commission for 1870, is copied at length, the importance of its subject-matter justifying the repetition of a statement in the precise expression of which there would be but slight hope of improvement.

“The broad Boulevards that encircle the fair city upon the banks of the Seine, contribute largely to the facilities of intercourse and traffic. A similar AVENUE, encompassing our own Worcester, would contribute more to the developement of the whole City, in the judgement of this Commission, than any other project that has been devised or consummated for years. The farm takes precedence of the shop; and yet, while no sum can be too great to lavish upon the intricate net work of alleys, courts and streets which separate the centre and heart of the Municipality into infinitesimal subdivisions, every dollar is grudged that is required to promote the convenience of those without whose toil man could not live.”

The farm and its produce are indispensable ; the middleman and his store are not absolute necessities. Whatever, then, has a tendency to open up the surrounding country ; to develope its natural charms ; and to encourage settlement and cultivation where now the bramble and the woodchuck hold undisputed possession ; substituting smooth lawns, neat gardens, and improved stock ; inducing the street loafer to become the independent yeoman, and attracting, by the simple aspect of rural loveliness the permanent sojourn of the chance wayfarer ; surely here, and in all this, is an object worth striving for, worth far more, in fact, than even current extravagance could possibly make it cost in realization. With such an Avenue constructed, there would be an amount of intercommunication of the extremities of the city, as of the outlying but adjacent towns, that would astonish those whose ocular mote is Main Street. That great artery of business would be relieved of much needless yet serious incumbrance : a relief which, attempted in season, can be both cheaply and prudently afforded. As it is now, from Holden to Leicester, from Paxton to Shrewsbury, everything must pass through our one great thoroughfare, wearing out our pavements, impeding our local traffic, laming beasts used for traction and scaring into disease animals destined for consumption. All these annoyances and evils would be obviated, all those benefits and more would be derived, from the construction of the Avenue suggested. So broad as to admit of adequate and grateful shade to ample footpaths ; so thoroughly built as to be proof alike against autumnal frost or vernal flood ; a convenience for the loaded team and an attraction for the pleasure carriage ; wooing occupation of hundreds of charming dells and nooks by its ruthless exposure of rustic beauty, thereby benefiting individuals and augmenting the general valuation ; a measure which commends itself in proportion as it is considered : one which this Commission will advocate in season and out of season, living or dying, in the hope and faith of its ultimate consummation."

Did the conception of the proposed AVENUE originate merely in a scheme to accommodate or furnish enjoyment for those who ride in pleasure carriages, numerous as that class is rapidly becoming, it would not be entertained for an instant by this Commission. Even in that case it might be desirable : but in that fact alone could be found no warrant for its adoption. It is in the necessity that exists for better and more uninterrupted ways of intercourse and traffic between the remoter suburbs ; not forgetting the wants of the adjoining Towns, whose obvious market is Worcester ; that a strong, if not convincing, reason is to be found why such an AVENUE should be opened to the public. The incentive that is offered to travel and the increase of commercial business that is developed by the construction of a first-class Highway, or Common Road, must be a matter of faith with the inhabitants of our fair City, to whom such advantages were never vouchsafed. In the light of experience our boasted Civilization

appears to have profited us but little. Twenty-Five centuries ago, the traveller from Brundisium to Rome could traverse almost the entire length of the Italian Peninsula, experiencing fewer impediments, and with more actual comfort upon the Road itself than is felt by the "free and enlightened citizen" who perils life and limb in his weary toil through the ridges and sloughs of Worcester. Men in these days, are so apt to suffer their attention to be arrested by the wider streams of traffic that they overlook the little rivulets whose multitude makes up for their individual lack of volume. It is essential to the developement of our busy City that the course of Railway travel shall be unimpeded. With this object, measures were taken to secure the transfer, from the centre to the circumference of the inhabited area, of the existing Tracks. The Great Circle is the true key to distance by Land, not less than by Sea. But conceding the utmost that may be claimed for the Railway as an agent of material prosperity, it is absolutely vital to our very existence that the Wagon of the Farmer and the Truck of the Teamster should possess every possible facility of access and transit. The power of the Elephant to pick up a needle is more remarkable than is his ability to uproot an Oak. Other things being equal,—natural advantages of position, and the like,—that community will quickly render itself master of the situation; outstripping its rivals in the race for commercial pre-eminence; which builds and maintains a perfect system of Highways, so thoroughly constructed as to be measurably proof against the vicissitudes of the seasons. In the proposed AVENUE these advantages should be secured, with the beauty of rural adornment afforded by the suitable plantation of Shade, and other Trees, conspicuous whether for bloom or foliage. *Nor, even then, should such an improvement be authorized, much more commenced, until the Right of Way, in perpetuity, had been absolutely conveyed to the City by the proprietors of real estate lying along the selected Route.* This Commission does not admit, at least in this instance, that "to him who hath shall be given." If greed and selfishness prove too strong in one direction, let the course of the AVENUE be changed towards some other quarter in which there is light enough for the perception that wise liberality is not incompatible with self-interest. Over much of the Route that ought to be adopted, there is already a travelled road which would simply re-



quire to be widened. For another portion, by the margin of the Lake, the public decision is likely to be anticipated by the action of individual proprietors. Throughout the entire distance no obstacles present themselves that should daunt the courage or impede the movements of a community like this. Want of space forbids more than a bare reference to the Boulevards of Chicago and St Louis, of which, in their as yet inchoate condition, we are told by shrewd observers that they promise to yield returns to the public treasury far more than commensurate with their exactions. In our own case it is only the adoption of the general plan, and the location of a Route with its definition by ineradicable metes and bounds, that is advocated without compromise or equivocation. A *Route*—while the land through which it may extend is comparatively valueless: and its *Definition* so indelibly and plainly that two thirds of the area comprehended shall not, as in the instance of Main Street, be stolen by thieves in the night! Construct it,—*after the RIGHT OF WAY is secured*,—when and as fast as you will;—a foot, a rod, or a mile annually, as the popular exigency and favor shall demand. Accepting the prediction, however, from this Commission, that the design, when once entered upon, will so commend itself in execution as to enlist the popular impatience of results in behalf of its immediate completion.

Had the plan of the Commission been limited to devising a more facile and agreeable way of access to Lake Quinsigamond, it would unquestionably have met with more universal acceptance. The wish to make that lovely sheet of water of easier resort is shared by all classes of the community. And yet, for that very reason, because the charms of this portion of the Route will almost ensure its construction, have especial pains been taken to enlarge upon the imperative necessity of the more rural and secluded sections of the proposed AVENUE. It is by no means certain that the beauties of the landscape disclosed by a *suitable* Avenue, following the arc which, commencing near the City Alms House, runs by the Sears, Chamberlain, and Flagg Farms, deflecting South Easterly so as to skirt the sparkling Reservoir of the Messrs. Coes, would not take precedence even when forced into close competition with the attractions of the Lake Valley. Still, the Lake occupies a peculiar relation to the entire

project which challenges for it a brief consideration. The subjoined extract from their Report for 1870, will vindicate the reputation of the Commissioners for ordinary prescience showing that, whatever their deficiencies, they were at least not blind to the signs of the times : —

“Above all — as indispensable to the completeness and symmetry of the design, LAKE QUINSIGAMOND should be embraced within its scope. The eye of covetousness already glances at that beautiful sheet of water. It may be that the people of Worcester will consent to hold the fairest ornament of their city at the will, or upon sufferance, of the capital ; but it is not believed that such tame acquiescence will be prompted by any one who has the wit to foresee, in a utilitarian sense only, the advantages that would follow upon its undisputed control. The opinion of the Commissioners is decided that the city of Worcester should obtain, from the Great and General Court, power to occupy and possess Lake Quinsigamond, for the purposes of a PUBLIC PARK, without prejudice to the rights of riparian owners, whatever they may be. In this way, if in no other, could the level of its waters be maintained at their average height, thus preserving the smooth and verdant banks which so much enhance its beauty. Nor can any other method be devised, half as effectual, of forestalling future attempts to divert the water of the Lake for the supply of metropolitan thriftlessness and waste.”

Of the soundness of the views, thus expressed, this Commission is more than ever persuaded. Lake Quinsigamond has been acquired by us, so far as Title may be secured through the agency of a popular vote cast under Legislative sanction. But, whether it will be regarded as reduced to usufruct or possession, in default of any action taken to utilize its pellucid waters, may well be doubted. Long ages since, in the days of Æsop, the-dog-in-the-manger performed his inglorious part. It is not likely that Worcester, in the Nineteenth Century, can desire or would be suffered to emulate that selfish example. Nevertheless the petition to the General Court, for sanction to the taking, by the Metropolis, of water from any source within fifty (50) miles, is a precious because timely warning. It tells us, in unmistakable tones, that the talent committed to us must not be hidden in a napkin nor lie buried in the earth. It says, almost in so many words ; — “ You claim that you must have control of Lake Quinsigamond for the sake of its supply of water. Take, then, and use it ! If, however, you fail to avail yourselves of this concession, do not complain at its possible resumption and grant to others ! ”



This Commission has no desire to magnify its functions, nor to exceed the admitted limits of its authority. But it would omit no practicable method of preserving Lake Quinsigamond in its integrity and to that end would again advise that its recognition as the WATER PARK of Worcester be solicited from the General Court. Viewing that Lake as the one unrivalled natural charm of our landscape, it is of opinion that the most expedient and feasible way of retaining it in its present beauty, or of developing it to extreme perfection, is to be found in compelling it to minister to our urgent needs. Projects to this effect are abundant ; to none of them are the Commissioners mechanicians enough to adhere. Some would be content to try the simple method of pumping by means of steam. These are conscious of the expense ; but adduce, by way of set-off, the *quality* of the result as against quantity which is all that can be pretended, and even that with restrictions, of existing modes and appliances. Another and larger class, comprising some of the most thoughtful and practical among our citizens, more than doubting the prudence of depending exclusively upon a solitary source and conduit, incline to favor the scheme of deriving any additional supply from the Lake. Of the insuperable difficulties, mysteriously hinted at by those whose gaze is riveted so closely to the setting of the sun behind the hills of Leicester, that they are blind to discern his rise “ by Shrewsbury clock ” such shrewd men of action make sport as involving only the simplest problems in mechanical engineering. Granted the force :— what shall prevent its operation ! The boldest conception is theirs however, who, reminding us that the original construction of the Causeway cost less than Twenty Thousand Dollars, (\$20,000 :) propose to add Fifteen or Twenty Feet to its height and thus retain the augmented volume of water above the dam so as to furnish the requisite power for its own elevation and at the same time maintain the necessary discharge at the outlet. Any inadequacy of gravitation to lift to the proper height and distance, they would supplement with the forces of Wind and Steam, held in reserve for public employment, when necessary, and leased for private occupation when their auxiliary might could be dispensed with. The annual outlay, under the most unpropitious conditions, it is claimed could hardly exceed the expense of that most curious

In concluding this Report, the Commissioners desire to express, in the most explicit manner, their profound sense of gratitude for the cordial and sympathetic co-operation which they received from the Municipal authorities, with scarcely an exception, during the past official year. The courtesy and kind encouragement of their fellow citizens, manifested in equal unstinted measure, require a similar, public acknowledgment. For whatsoever criticism, grammatical or other, accorded to their efforts, the Commissioners believe that they close the year with no outstanding obligations, it having been their aim to discharge such indebtedness on the spot, as it accrued.

All which is Respectfully submitted for and in behalf of the Commission, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN, *Chairman.*

Worcester, Massachusetts, January 26th, A. D., 1872.

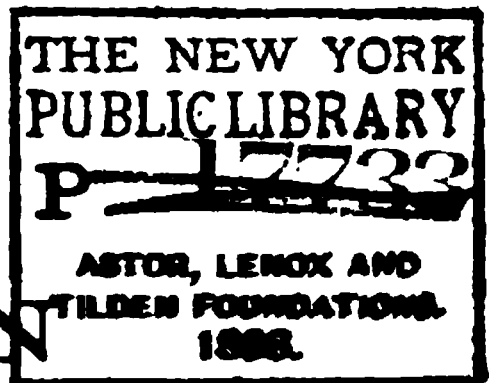




# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION



OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1873.

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WORCESTER:  
PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,  
PALLADIUM OFFICE.  
1874.



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE COMMISSION OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To The Honorable City Council :*

The "REPORT of all their acts and doings, and of the condition of the PUBLIC GROUNDS and shade trees and ornamental trees thereon, and on said streets and highways, and an account of receipts and expenditures for the same" for the financial year ending November 30th, A. D. 1873, which the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS is required by the City Charter to render, in the month of January, is herein submitted :

*City of Worcester in account with Commission of Public Grounds,  
Dr.:*

Cash balance on hand 12 o'clock, p. m., Nov. 30, 1872,	\$832 82
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*Per contra, Cr.:*

By amount "sunk" by the Auditor, a. m., Dec. 1, 1872,	832 82
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*A. D. 1873, Dr.:*

Appropriation,	\$4,000 00
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Rent of Elm Park, sale of grass, etc. etc.,	578 00
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	\$4,578 00
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*Per contra, Cr.:*

Bills left over from 1872 (not presented,	\$57 35
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*Account of urinals.*

Kinnicutt & Co., castings and labor,	\$300 00
D. M. Woodward, bed stones, etc.,	19 25
Water Department (setting, &c.),	62 00
	<hr/> \$381 25

*Account of trees, guards, etc. etc.*

James Draper, (for John Foley) trees and planting,	\$4 50
O. B. Hadwen, trees and planting,	108 00
Cornelius Collins, trees and planting,	204 00
Sumner Bridges, " " "	5 00
Benjamin C. Jaques (labor and stock for guards of new and old trees,	418 76
Technical Institute (castings and stock for guards,)	300 00
	<hr/> \$1,040 26

*In account of grading the Common, manure, etc.:*

Geo. T. Sutton, new pump on Common, repairs at Elm Park,	\$23 00
J. D. Lovell, seeds, tools, &c.,	51 86
C. Hamilton, Report of 1872,	25 46
Repairs of lawn mower, tools, sharpening, etc.,	8 50
In re Lincoln, Chairman, vs. Dean,	122 97
Riley & Smith, 2,910 yds. earth at 25 cts.,	727 50
" " " labor at grading,	89 99
Highway Department, street scrapings,	145 30
James Downey, manure,	25 67
W. F. Pond, "	23 50
C. F. Henry, "	37 69
J. B. Brooks, "	30 65
	<hr/> \$1,312 09

*Account of Public Grounds, trimming trees, etc.:*

Samuel F. Shattuck, pruning,	\$67 20
Charles H. Perry, "	43 25
David Rowe and others, labor,	473 10
John Barnes and team, labor and hire of,	61 00
Michael McGrath, Elm Park,	335
John Barnes, labor and team, Elm Park,	35
Benj. C. Jaques, one-half cost of repairs to west fence of Elm Park,	4
	<hr/> \$1,021



*Summary :*

Old bills from 1872,		\$57 35
Account of urinals,		381 25
“ “ trees, guards, etc.,		1,040 26
“ “ grading Common, etc.,		1,312 00
“ “ Public Grounds, trees, care of, etc.,		1,021 72
		<hr/>
Total expenditure,		\$3,812 67
Appropriation and revenue,	\$4,578 00	
Less	3,812 67	
	<hr/>	
Leaving on hand, Nov. 30, 1873,	\$765 33	

The property on hand belonging to the COMMISSION consists of:

1 Wheelbarrow.	27 Tree Guards of 3 to 7 pickets each.
20 Settees.	1 Iron Bar.
43 Signs.	1 Mowing Machine (worn out).
1 Roller.	1 Dung Fork.
2 Iron Rakes.	1 Grass Hook.
2 Wooden Rakes.	1 Hoe.
1 Scythe.	1 Pick-axe.
45 Tree Guards of 12 pickets each.	

Together with a good supply of affirmative ballots upon the question of accepting the Act providing for the removal from the Common of the Meeting House of the First Parish.

Ever since the work of grading that portion of the Common lying east of the railways was completed, curiosity has been rife as to the intentions of the COMMISSION relative to the part which remained untouched. This curiosity manifested its friendliness by frequent proffers of gratuitous advice, and occasionally its chagrin by sneers at those who were charitably supposed to have grown weary in well doing. That ubiquitous committee which bestrides the fences or snores upon the settees ; to whose members the dumping of a car-load of paving stones is an individual concern, and without immediate explanation a personal insult ; who “toil not, neither do they spin,” but have ever tobacco for their pipes ; who are too lazy to dig, and if to beg ashamed, are yet without visible means of support ; that precious class of our fellow citizens was vociferous in denouncing the inertia of the COMMISSION, and in assurances of what its brazen professors could and would accomplish, were only their arms deep enough in the City Treasury.

But the opportunity, when it actually presented itself, was not suffered to pass unimproved. The excavation of a cellar upon the old homestead of Hon. Isaac Davis, enabled the COMMISSION to procure all the earth necessary to bring the whole tract up to grade; although, by a singular coincidence, in this as in the similar work of A. D. 1871, there was not found a load deficient or to spare. The capacity of that piece of ground to absorb material was something astonishing. Twenty-nine hundred and ten yards of dirt were required before the correct grade could be achieved. Procured so handy, the COMMISSION deemed itself fortunate in obtaining it at any rate, but felicitated itself doubly upon getting it on such reasonable terms. For a very large quantity of the surface soil consisted of garden loam, rich enough to be applied as top dressing, and which was therefore kept separate to be used for that especial purpose. When executing their initial task, in A. D. 1871, extreme difficulty was experienced in procuring material enough of sufficiently good quality to employ as a covering for the forbidding acres of hardpan. By scraping streets and raking stables, however, something was accomplished. How much, combined with the additional stimulus and protection of manure and snow during the winter of A. D. 1871-2, let the very satisfactory appearance of the several detached lawns throughout the past summer bear witness. Nevertheless those lawns are less sloping than could be wished and, from the nature of their constituents, would well repay under-drainage; a work, however, that this COMMISSION does not propose to itself, now or hereafter.

The tract between Main street and the Railways was filled up to grade, sown thickly, and judiciously studded with polite requests to all, citizens or strangers, to keep off the grass. The citizen, with the deference that he has always paid to the reasonable rules of this COMMISSION, rules established in his own interest as coparcener, has cheerfully refrained from trampling upon the nascent herbage. Strangers have not been seen for many a weary month and are, it is greatly to be feared, suffering from acute grammatical inflammation. Perhaps it may be well enough to state, for general information, that it has not been the intention of this COMMISSION to make the grass upon the Common

object of adoration, but to preserve the freshness of the lawns for the enjoyment of their fellow citizens; expecting that their verdure would be appreciated upon Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and other holidays, when the people have a habit of disregarding all restraint, except only that imposed by their own good sense.

Little could be done towards the construction of paths during the past season, but fortunately not much was required. No satisfactory arrangement of the grounds can be executed so long as the City Hall and Meeting House of the First Parish disfigure them. It must needs be but a short time before the requirements of the public business can no longer be met without a new City Hall. Already the swarm which fed delighted upon the *honey* as it fell from the lips of the modern Chrysostom! has winged its flight to

“Fresh fields and pastures new.”

Had the Act of the General Court, which allowed the City to resume possession of that Meeting House, been accepted, as it would have been but for the malign influence of a Christian (?) Saturnalia, a great public improvement might be consummated, the First Parish materially benefited, and the sacred cause of Religion relieved from a chronic scandal. That Act has not spent its force, but may be voted upon at any time hereafter designated by the City Council. The men who think that an interest account, “running to the millennium” would be less than a payment out of hand, will doubtless continue to resist an acceptance of the Act. Yet the necessity is inexorable, and the ultimate removal or demolition of that Meeting House is as certain as anything within the compass of human ability. Meanwhile let the people, familiarizing themselves with the idea that a new City Hall will have to be erected before many years have elapsed, nerve themselves also to the determination that the scant territory of their little Common shall not be wrested from its proper uses while there are so many other suitable sites for such an edifice.

The Fences around the Common are, as any one may see, in their usual dilapidated condition. Worthless for exclusion of the runaway horse or the Texan wild steer, they have not the merit of beauty to suggest their longer toleration. It has been

the intention of this COMMISSION to remove them by sections, employing the rails thus gained for repairs upon the decaying enclosure of Elm Park. Sufficient material can be secured in this way to keep the fences about that Park in a comparatively decent state for years. But the Common should not be neglected. Fences of themselves are neither the essence of beauty nor its suggestion. One can possess more grace in structure than another, as can a gaol. But there is never wanting to them a sense of constraint from which any possible relief should be welcome. Early in the spring of A. D. 1873, this COMMISSION, desiring that improvements in this respect should keep pace with the reclamation of the territory, petitioned the Honorable Council to set a substantial kerbstone along the line of Park Street, where there is none at present, said kerb being dressed to an acute edge atop, and rising six inches above the crown of the path inside. This kerb could be placed upon the existing stone posts, if thought advisable, they being broken off short for the purpose. If desired, an independent base might be used, rings being let into those posts to fasten animals thereto, so as to insure a more rigid blockade of the street. This request for a trial of what can scarcely be regarded as an experiment, is respectfully renewed. A commencement might well be made upon the north side of Park Street.

In a former report of this COMMISSION an opinion was expressed that the work of improvement upon the Common could not be considered complete till after the construction of a *Jet d'Eau*. A very moderate expenditure, in view of the possible results, would suffice. The basin of a Fountain to be kept in play during the disuse of the *Jet*, would be admirably located upon the site of the old school house, confronting the new Railway Station and in the direct line of vision from the City Hall. Water drawn immediately from the Leicester Reservoir would attain a height of 340 feet, dwarfing into insignificance the boasted display at Chatsworth. If taken from Newton Hill a vertical column could be thrown 200 feet into the air. No city in our whole broad land has the same chance for unique and simple adornment. No city in the land that had the chance would neglect it. A peer is charm in itself, its attraction to Worcester of multitudes to see

upon it, would more than justify the insignificant cost of its construction and maintenance.

In the matter of the selection of a proper location for the SOLDIERS' MONUMENT, there has been, during the past year, the usual spasmodic activity. The customary invasion of your deliberations; the old talk of the imperative need for instantaneous action; the same curt exaction of decision without opportunity for discussion or review. This COMMISSION, to which the care of the Common is confided by law, is associated at the last moment, it is true, with a committee to whose members, as such, the Common is nothing but an eligible site. The work of the past three years is to be undone, because *so, it is cheaper!* and the poor woman who seeks that sole oasis in a wilderness of bricks and mortar, that her child may get a breath of fresh air, is deprived of even that outlook upon the purity of Heaven. Driven at the whip and spur of "military necessity," your predecessors were constrained to favor the location of that Monument "as near the centre of the Common as possible." From that decision an appeal is now taken to your cooler judgment.

The objections to such location are manifold and overwhelming. A superficial area is required that cannot be spared. No matter in what part of the Common it should be placed, the approaches and paths necessary to render it accessible when once in position, would exact what little territory was left. Trees must be felled to the right and left that this metallic elegy may be duly appreciated. The whole system of paths must be confused, if not utterly destroyed, to the continual and permanent hindrance of all our population who have occasion to traverse the Common. Of that Common, then, when the Hartford stonecutter has finished, what will be left worth having?

But this abuse of trust; for the assignment to a part of what belongs to all is nothing less discreditable or wrong; has not even the poor excuse of necessity. *It is merely cheaper.* We are intensely loyal. Our patriotism oppresses us and must, somehow, find vent. Nay, so overpowering and exuberant is it, that we are miserable till it is manifested in brass or marble. *But cheaply,* mind you! and always with a keen eye to the dollar. A monument we must have, and why not put it in Naboth's vineyard?

But even parsimony does not exact the sacrifice of our little Common. There are sites for this monument in plenty ; more suitable, more accessible, without at the same time offering an impediment to public travel. Summer Street will have to be widened ere long. Washington Square would answer the purpose admirably. Wellington Street should be doubled in breadth ; the triangle at its intersection with Chandler Street would afford an ample site. Room runs to waste in Lincoln Square between Prescott and Salisbury Streets. All of those broad openings must be adorned somehow and at some time. Why not make a beginning now, and with this monument ? Wherever it is to be, large, vacant spaces must surround it. Such cannot, ought not to be carved out of the Common. Every one of the locations just suggested is, or soon will be, adequately provided in this respect. Every one of them will be encompassed by broad streets sufficient for the defile of an army. To them all our people are hourly drawn by the claims of business. Through and past some of them none of us but must go once. Honor the dead, then, as you will, (you cannot reverence them too much !) but spare to the living their sole place of resort ! Dole not out patriotism with the one hand while scrimping the weights with the other !

But objections of locality will be urged by the men who want this Monument in their own door yards. Lincoln Square is too far North. Jaques Square, (if that may be so christened, which is no square), too far South ; and, it will be whispered by men who would not say it aloud as their true reason—Washington Square is down among the Irish. Nevertheless this is a question of mortuary monuments ; and those of us who would be buried decently will have to be conveyed further South or North than Wellington Street or Lincoln Square. For the Irish, as they were esteemed fit to die for the Republic, it might not be unreasonable to allow them to renew their vows of loyalty at the base of a structure designed to commemorate valor free from stain, devotion without alloy. They cannot *eat* the Monument may they not safely be trusted to digest its significance ? At the incalculable sacrifices of a War fought to suppress Sectarianism and exorcise Caste, the proper disposition of a memorial our slain would scarcely seem to offer fit occasion for the revival of either fell spirit.

At the earnest solicitation of the Alderman from Ward Four, supported as it was by their own convictions of necessity, the COMMISSION took measures, in the early Spring, for the construction and erection upon the Common of a couple of urinals. The science of æsthetics leaves us in doubt as to the extent wherein art may be presumed to regulate such structures. The Commissioners feel no overweening pride in the matter, and arrogate no credit to themselves. They would accord to the Alderman great fertility of conception ; to Mr. Fish promptness of delivery ; and to Mr. Samuel Woodward a lively enthusiasm over the prospect. The modesty of the Commissioners was vexed at first by the impertinent curiosity of their fellow citizens, unhappily for their bashfulness not limited to sex. Nevertheless, the object of their erection, as it became generally understood, commended itself ; until at last popular fastidiousness, as it finds expression at the Hay Scales, if it imputes any censure, blames the COMMISSION because such erections are not more numerous. They have unquestionably proved a general convenience. If any annoyance has resulted to delicate olfactories from their peculiar perfume, it may perhaps be claimed in their defence, or at least pleaded in mitigation, that mistakes have sprung from confounding their especial scent with that pungent odor of sanctity which emanated from another and proximate portion of the Common.

The cistern near the northeastern corner of the City Hall was connected with the water mains last autumn, despite the protest of this COMMISSION. If it is wanted solely to accommodate the manufacturers of fire engines, furnishing them with facilities for the display of their power of suction, the spot could not be worse chosen. Their cinders foul the ground ; their hot and acrid smoke and steam kill the trees ; the trial itself is an insufferable nuisance to the hundreds of women that have occasion to pass and wish neither to be drowned nor stifled. But it may be that the object was to get rid of the power of gravitation derived from the elevation of Leicester ; substituting for its full head the lifting capacity of a steamer. If such was the case it would appear probable that other heads were lost in the operation than that compressed within the street mains.

The condition of ELM PARK is substantially unaltered. A



arge open ditch has been excavated upon its Western side, designed to receive the drainage from Newton Hill and deliver it at the head of the sewer leading into Highland Street. But as before intimated, no systematic effort to drain the Park has been attempted in past years, because of the utter lack of a sewer, and later, by reason of a desire to test the actual operation of the one that has been constructed. Although like Mercutio's wound not so "deep as a well," like that also, "it will do." The probability that the City Government would lay out a section of the new Western Avenue across the Park, a probability which has lately developed into assurance, would of itself have been suggestive of delay, after the measure was first agitated, until its final decision.

Nor will it be wise to attempt anything until the completion of that great improvement, when the relative position of the plateau to the Avenue, the Hill, and the territory adjoining, can be more distinctly estimated. It is hoped, however, that the construction of a basin for a pond or Ornamental Water, which shall ultimately comprehend a *JET D'EAU*, may be found consistent with the due and rapid execution of the municipal work. The material thus obtained would be applicable to the task of filling the triangle at the northwest corner of the Park, which would otherwise form a mere receptacle for waste water from Highland Street. This Commission has never lost sight of the importance of reclaiming that Park. Its improvement is desirable in whatsoever light it may be regarded. But it has ever appeared better to make haste slowly, that mistakes might be avoided, wasteful expenditures prevented, and no impatient steps have to be retraced. The wisdom of this policy has been vindicated by time which, in its lapse, has brought about the possibility of change.

Of late years the eastern portion of Elm Park has been monopolized by the annual elephant, the fugitive clown, and perennial base ball. No especial inconvenience is felt on this account at present, nor if the Hill is assumed, need these uses be disturbed for some time to come. But the game of base ball, as now played is pious at best, scarcely supplying the redeeming merit of a dreary amusement to the spectators. It is believed that the City might wisely purchase an acre or two in different sections of its territory, for the express purpose of allowing and inciting that portion of



our population which inclines to and requires athletic exercise out-doors, to gratify its tastes and needs without annoyance. It is hard for boys or men to be compelled to walk two or three miles to a playground whence, after hearty exertion, they must traverse the same distance on their way home.

The Shade-Trees of Worcester challenge no particular remark. Rather more than the annual average have been removed from the streets and a much larger number than usual were planted. A sense of poignant regret afflicted all when the decree went forth from the City Hall proclaiming that the "Vandals" had doomed those patriarchal elms on Front Street. Yet they could not be suffered longer without running a risk of possible collisions against which the municipal Goths had no right to insure. It is the purpose of this COMMISSION to set out a younger and thriftier row in the place of those thus extirpated by the Huns. The following is an enumeration of the trees that were planted directly by the COMMISSION, and of the streets upon which they *ought to be* standing unharmed by mattock, horse or goat :

	Elms.	Maples		Elms.	Maples
Main Street, (south) . . . . .	15	37	East Worcester . . . . .	—	6
Elm . . . . .	5	24	Fruit . . . . .	—	29
Sever . . . . .	—	43	Cedar . . . . .	—	17
Oak . . . . .	—	6	Pleasant (corner of West) . .	3	—
William . . . . .	—	14	North Ashland . . . . .	—	8
Blossom . . . . .	—	8	Chatham . . . . .	—	6
Congress . . . . .	—	5	Chestnut . . . . .	—	1
West . . . . .	—	27	Merrick . . . . .	—	28

A large number of thrifty trees were the gratuitous offering of that individual generosity which, for years past, has striven to throw a leafy canopy over Boynton and Highland Streets : an example that cannot be too cordially commended to the imitation of his fellow citizens, whom Mr. Salisbury, Jr., has thus unselfishly aimed to benefit. Credit was allowed at the Treasury for others, upon claims duly made and approved. Quite a lot of trees that were planted under a special contract upon the streets easterly of Elm Park ; and which were bargained for as *acer saccharinum* or rock maple ; turned out upon official inspection for acceptance, to consist of *acer rubrum* or swamp maple. The

species are by no means equivalent. But, although the sugar maple has few rivals and no superiors as a shade tree, the scarlet maple, in spite of detraction, is not without striking merits. To quote the language of a keen and watchful naturalist :

“Possibly no species present such a diversity of color as the red or swamp maple (*acer rubrum*.) On one leaf we have, before now, been able to trace ten distinct colors and shades, and all in such harmonious combination as to create the impression of a direct and special design.”

It has its origin in swamps, because by a wise provision of nature, the seed, borne upon the winds, lodges there and germinates, as it would not elsewhere and otherwise. But it is tolerant of treatment, (as it needs must be to survive what it receives,) and endures transplantation with little check. Notwithstanding this error, or deliberate attempt to cheat, on the part of the contractor, it is believed that the City, by the precaution of the COMMISSION was saved harmless, and finally got the worth of its money. When last heard from that “arboricultural idolater,” after swinging around the circle of our Police Court and County House, was pestering the military officials at Togus with hypothetical demands upon the unexpended funds of this COMMISSION.

The streets upon the Eastern side of Worcester are in greater need of Shade Trees than any others. But the location or width of many of them may require to be altered after the completion of the new Railway Station. In some, which might have immediate attention, the existence and sufferance at large of the rank and omnivorous goat is a valid reason for inaction. Whether trees could be planted faster than goats can girdle or destroy them is a problem to the solution of which neither the tastes of this COMMISSION, nor the interests of the Treasury incline. Allusion is thus made that the impartiality of the COMMISSION may be appreciated. Its original recommendation of an AVENUE by the Lake might be accepted as evidence that, since its views were colored by sectional prejudice, neither will its action be affected by any local bias.

The plantation of young elms and maples commenced by the COMMISSION upon the southwestern corner of Elm Park, in

autumn of A. D. 1871, is beginning to give evidence of thrift and vigor. Parching summers, succeeded by bleak and snowless winters sorely tested their endurance. The vitality which has outlived such seasons may be counted upon with very great certainty. Comparatively so few of them have succumbed, however, that the inconsiderable loss can scarcely be cited in proof of "the survival of the fittest." From that plantation in a few years, at most, should be derived a cheap and hardy lot of selected trees, in number sufficient for the insatiable cravings of our longest Avenues. In no other way could they be procured so economically. And while this COMMISSION pretends to no especial foresight in the plan and completion of this nursery, it can and does claim that its prevision and reasonable care will result in supplying a want that could not have been satisfied so well in any other way. It required no great prescience to anticipate the occurrence of a future necessity. But when the exigency is actually upon us, it is none the less pleasant to feel assured that we have prepared ourselves to meet it.

The acquisition of NEWTON HILL by the City has been repeatedly advised by this COMMISSION in whose Report for A. D. 1871, occurs the following passage :

"If the entire, or even a major part of the water supply of the City is to be derived from Leicester, that Hill must be invaluable in the immediate future, as the site for a Reservoir which shall hold a temporary store against emergencies, and also aid in equalizing the pressure throughout that broad arc in which the western suburbs are comprised, and in the chord subtending which it is the most salient feature."

Have we not lately received an impressive admonition to beware of overweening confidence and to provide, as there suggested, a temporary store against emergencies? Dependence upon a single main (it matters not how trustworthy) is but a frail dependence, after all. It was the pitcher that went too often to the fountain which got broken at last. To show how important are the interests involved in this matter, a table is herewith furnished of the valuation of Wards One, Seven and Eight, whose entire

property lies within the range, and would be subject to the watch and ward of this Hill, were a proper use made of its summit :

Aggregate valuation of Worcester, \$47,294,834.

	Realty.	Personalty.
Ward One,	\$5,864,100	\$1,698,150
Ward Seven,	4,996,100	1,048,900
Ward Eight,	5,864,800	1,676,350
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$16,225,000	\$4,428,400
Total,		20,653,400
Resident Bank Shares,		840,423
		<hr/>
		\$21,493,823

It must be conceded that, so large a proportion of its real and personal property being imperilled, with scarcely the semblance of protection, the permanent welfare of the City is absolutely absorbed in a suitable decision of this matter. Any wild March morning, that should behold the population of those three Wards wandering aimlessly, or distracted, amid the ashes of their former homes, would be a woeful day for Worcester. And so keen is the competition between communities enjoying anything like equal natural advantages, that it may be doubted, however elastic our energies, whether we could recover from such a blow in season to retain our relative position among our sister cities. But yet, to prevent such a result, of a fire fed by a hurricane, we have one hose company with its apparatus, shall have a steamer in the fullness of time, and—no water supply ! However, better so than an imperfect supply that inspires unwarranted confidence. A table of relative elevations of different points throughout the City, above mean Tide Water, which was furnished to a Committee of the General Court by the writer, is herewith submitted, that it may be put upon official record :

Elevation above mean Tide Water.	Feet.
Newton Hill,	672.29
Fairmount,	638.91
Chandler Hill (reservoir),	640.61
“ “ (summit),	738.37
Hunt's Reservoir,	655.90
North Pond (high water),	537.00
Bell Pond (high water),	666.50
George Crompton's House (water table),	629.88
Leicester Reservoir (rollway),	822.87
Cambridge and Mill streets (high water in brook),	438.63
Main Street (man-hole at intersection with Davis Court),	482.04

There are many eminences within the City limits of supe or

altitude to Newton Hill, but not one which occupies its relative position to so large a portion of densely settled territory. When the late Mayor Knowlton was perfecting the acquisition of Elm Park, he previously ascertained, by actual survey, that its lowest depression was higher than the steps of the City Hall—its centre nearer the Oread than Lincoln Square. How much more truly this can be asserted of the Hill, let any one stand on Charlton Street, for instance, and, looking across the intervening valley, determine for himself. There it stands, confronting the whole western slope, dominating the intervalle and capable of being made the salvation of half the City.

Assume now that a Reservoir has been constructed upon the summit of Newton Hill, sufficiently massive to withstand pressure and capacious enough to supply something larger than a garden hose. From that Reservoir conducting pipes radiate in every direction; towards the Sears' Farm and Elinwood Nurseries, if you please, North and South; and through and throughout Pleasant, Elm, Cedar, William, Bowdoin, John, and Highland Streets. These pipes can be comparatively small because they are so numerous, and of stout cast iron because they are no larger. You have organized ten or a dozen hose companies. A fire breaks out at the head of William Street. There are no sick or sound horses floundering through two feet of mealy snow, or striving to keep an uncertain footing upon glairy ice, in a vain effort to haul a wheezing steamer seasonably to the spot. Instead,—the light hose carriages are readily and rapidly drawn by such members of their respective companies as first reach them; volunteers not lacking; lines of hose are unreeled and speedily attached to hydrants at the corners of William, Cedar, Elin, and even Pleasant Streets on the South; as well as Bowdoin and John on the North. There are then six streams from as many independent mains, each with the full head from the Reservoir, and every one throwing a column of water sixty feet, clear of the ridge pole. The writer saw the first trial of the Bell Pond Aqueduct when the water was directed upon the flames in an old shed—behind Alderman Spurr's drug store. He had just come from a service of four years as foreman of hose, but confesses that neither before nor since has he witnessed ought like that. Shingles, clapboards,

even boards, went down like grain before the reaper. As to the fire—the shed can be seen for the trouble.

This plan saves the purchase of steamers, which are short-lived, always out of order, too heavy for our steep hills with their snow, slush and mud; and which at best, are a feeble substitute for gravitation. It dispenses with the purchase and subsequent maintenance of horses, sometimes sick and always eating their heads off. It retains the trained experience and approved gallantry of the Fire Department, re-enlisting companies as hosemen. And no matter what its promises, its capability of complete performance may be confidently affirmed. You obtain a head that commands the Technical Institute, the Oread or the prospective Jaques Hospital: and to save one or all of those Institutions might be worth the entire cost.

What is the alternative? At present not a steamer, not a glut of hose. If there were a steamer it could not get enough water. But some time or other, when our houses are all burned, we may look for another large main crawling along Newton Street. Pray, how large a main can the City Treasury afford, if it shrinks aghast at this plan, whose first cost is its last? How long has it been forgotten that the strength of a pipe is in inverse ratio to its size? How many steamers can you supply from a sixteen inch main at the end of its mile and a half of longitude; The writer has seen a little Hunneman tub drain a large double decked suction engine, worked on a wager by every man that could cling to its brakes, so dry in three minutes that the air could be heard blowing a hundred yards away. The analogy is obvious.

This system of hydrodynamics rests upon gravitation with a faith that is "childlike and bland." The writer cares not with what it has to compete; whether with steam, with animal or with human power. *Gravitation* can beat them all and beat them easily. What on earth the City of Worcester wants of steamers, when an exhaustless and irresistible power is ready at hand, environing and almost oppressing us with its superfluity, is a problem worthy of solution by the freshmen at the Technical Institute or the apprentices of the Mechanics Association. The senate would scout it. Why, then, will not our people apply themselves to comprehend the topography of the City.

These views, announced long since through newspaper columns, are reiterated after a twelve-month of reflection. The lapse of time has deprived them of none of their weight, while the amount of property exposed to constant peril is incalculably augmented. Repetition cannot add to their force, but neither can a new statement be framed to impress you more strongly.

It is urged, however, that there need be no haste in the matter ; and His Honor the Mayor, in his Inaugural Address, remarks that "as the period within which the City may take this property extends two years from April 15, 1873, I have no desire to press the subject upon your attention now, being perfectly willing to abide the time when it shall naturally claim your consideration."

"There's a good time coming, boys ;  
Wait a little longer,"

sang "Maniac" Russell. "Please be kind enough to fix the date, sir !" roared out the audience. Might it not seem that the time when this subject would "naturally claim your consideration" would be immediately that you learned the dire peril from which, in the providence of God, the City has escaped ! Just as soon as it was known that our entire reliance, for days together, after the fracture of the great main, must be upon the store of water accumulated in Bell Pond ! In what manner can our consideration be claimed more "naturally" than by those silent but irresistible forces of heat and cold, under whose operation the wit of man admits itself helpless as an infant ?

Moreover speedy action would appear to be due, in sheer justice to the proprietors of the land, who have certainly some claim to know the ultimate disposition of their property. Any profitable use of it by themselves is precluded, so long as the City threatens to dispossess them. Besides which, if an amicable arrangement cannot be effected, no one with the slightest experience of the possibilities of legal procrastination will find any measure of superfluity in the time limited by the statute. A year or more is yet allowed, within which period, should nothing untoward occur to prevent, possession of Newton Hill may be secured. Possibly our exemption from devastating fires may not endure so long.

It has been urged that this Hill should be reserved for some public edifice, offering as it does, a site so commanding. But ex-



perience teaches that Architecture is a costly amusement for a community ; and that its structures are always a prolific source of expense, even if only built when and as needed. Moreover, Architecture has adorned few summits, while the Builder of the Universe has clothed this eminence with a simple beauty that not even the folly of man should be suffered to impair. A Reservoir would be useful and should be ornamental. Another edifice like that upon Maple and Walnut Streets, would be a blunder without the excuse of originality.

The judgment of this Commission has been repeatedly expressed that it is not now, will probably never be the policy of Worcester to construct and maintain a huge overgrown Park. Room enough it must have, ample space for playgrounds, perhaps an area sufficient for the instructive circus, and the moral menagerie. But the opinion of the Commission is now as it was in 1870, that the true pleasure ground of our people is to be found in those broad AVENUES that at once adorn and develop the City. At that time, in a vision of the future, the prediction was ventured that an "AVENUE similar to the broad Boulevards that encompass the fair city upon the banks of the Seine, would contribute more to the development of the whole city in the judgment of this Commission, than any other project that has been devised or consummated for years." And now, in a review of what has been achieved, it is simple justice to assert that every dollar which has been expended hitherto accounts for itself, in arithmetical ratio, upon the analysis of our civic progression.

Nevertheless, opinions differ ; and a gentleman who has recently quitted office, if to his personal satisfaction at least with no loss of public esteem, has taken extreme occasion to say that

"Wide streets are convenient and necessary, and when the City is built up with stores and public buildings abutting directly upon the sidewalk, they are almost indispensable for the admission of light and air, besides being an effectual barrier against the spread of fire ; but in the sparsely populated portions of the City where only dwelling houses exist, standing at least fifteen feet from the sidewalk on either side, sixty feet is a liberal width, and if kept in good repair is far better than eighty feet unsafe for travel.

There are many people who believe it to be a great public duty to build streets away out into the country where they are not needed except for private travel, because it will cost the city less to do the work now than it will two years hence. This is a great mistake."



This expression of opinion, while possibly not attaining to the dignity of an aphorism, undoubtedly contains a germ of truth. A wide AVENUE to encompass the City, was certainly for years persistently recommended by this COMMISSION. A portion of it, so much as throws open to the public enjoyment and use the western shore of Lake Quinsigamond, became the object of a petition subscribed by a numerous and influential body of citizens. Another portion, stretching from the Holden road to Webster Square, was decreed, within the last few weeks, by the prescient wisdom of your predecessors. But—yet more significant! the almost unanimous suffrage of the people, singling out, for a peculiar mark of approbation, that member of the City Government to whose shrewdness and courage the actual accomplishment of this comprehensive and beneficial project will be especially due, of itself denotes that there are, indeed “many people who believe it to be a great public duty,” etc., and that their name is legion.

The distinction between “private” travel and any other, so palpable to the objector, does not appear as obvious to the unofficial crowd. Wherein does private differ from other travel? Have they any points of similarity? If so, what? Does the use of Lincoln Street by the Alderman from Ward Two with his family carriage, constitute that travel private which the passage over the same thoroughfare of those gay municipal equipages that, in interminable procession, bear festive and fragrant offerings to the porcine trough, transmutes to public? Or do they alike and equally possess and savor of the freedom of the City? It has always appeared plain enough to this COMMISSION that in so far as such official reprobation was intended for its benefit, except for private travel, streets—“strait” and safe like Quinsigamond Avenue, or “broad and leading unto destruction,” as the Jo. Bill road, would be of the slightest necessity. Certainly upon the very infrequent occasions for public travel, such as the annual excursion to the Poor Farm with the subsequent trial of its official larder, it is not to be doubted that the attraction of a succulent spare rib would tempt the most obese Alderman to the dangers of the veriest cart-path.

The proposition of this COMMISSION, approved as it has been at the Polls and in the Council Chamber, *is not* what would be in-

ferred from the objection ; nor have the people so decisively approved a scheme to build "broad streets into the country" that "nobody needs," etc. Upon the route decreed settlement exists and dwellings will require to be moved. But, nor yet is the objection valid. A street, designed solely for traffic, may well be narrower than another wherein comfort and recreation can hope to have a share. Provide adequate sidewalks, and who shall say that there will be any superfluity of roadway in eighty (80) feet of width? Good taste and neighborly comity furnish the sole assurance that buildings will be retired fifteen feet, or even fifteen inches "from the sidewalk on either side;" and glaring infractions of such tacit understanding are not so uncommon in Worcester, as to preclude the idea that bores may be found among us to whom comity and good taste are utter strangers.

Shade will be requisite and rest: the trees, not less than the seats beneath them, will require room. But, although, in detail, every cavil might be answered, it is only necessary in a case so explicit, to repeat that the plan of this COMMISSION, be that of others what it may, contemplates an AVENUE which shall open up, for culture and domicile, a large and ever-increasing territory. Which shall make land accessible to the artizan or day laborer, so that by reasonable thrift he may acquire a homestead at a tolerable price. And yet which shall rank among the finest of our thoroughfares, to be sought out, occupied, and improved by the tasteful from abroad, who have eyes to see and the means to gratify their inclination. Is it not but too painfully clear that our population is closely crowded? Huddled together in a narrow valley, between two abrupt ridges? Will it be denied that all concerned, the community and the individual, parents and children, the public health and private comfort, would be vastly benefited by an immediate and wider dispersion? And, if such gregariousness is of evil tendency, does not that municipality act wisely taking measures, at one and the same time, to augment the sum of individual happiness and promote the general welfare? The Romans, who carved their way through the world with sword; who planted their feet in steps that were never retraced; whose lines of circumvallation and contra-vallation are the basis for Boulevards of Europe; built roads, also, that might serve a

model for the men whose proud boast is that, once, at least, in a generation, they can hold a Mechanics' Fair. Those *Via* were supplied with stations for the refreshment of the weary traveler or his animal; were lined with trees profuse of shade or bounteous of fruit, and were worthy in every way of a race that "stamped its individuality" ineffaceably upon the earth. This COMMISSION cannot claim, either for the municipality or itself, to have done much in imitation of that heroic example. But it does take pride in the fact that hereafter, to the very lowliest among us, as he wanders by the western shore of Quinsigamond, or along the hither verge of the City, no one shall cry trespass! or bid him begone! And so of our whole noble AVENUE, as it shall surely be. This may be but a trifling satisfaction, in the estimation of some, nor would it discount at the Banks; but, such as it is, it is heartfelt.

The question is often put and it is a pertinent one, how shall these exterior AVENUES be intersected, so as to supply facilities of ready communication with them, from East to West and the reverse? A partial answer to this inquiry may be found, furnishing also a practicable solution to the problem, in a communication addressed to your predecessors by the Chairman of this COMMISSION, in his individual capacity, just after a decree had been passed by the Honorable Council, the execution of which will compel the destruction of one of the longest and finest rows of Shade Trees in Worcester. As its tenor faithfully conveys the sentiments of this COMMISSION upon the general subject, it is reproduced here as the easiest method of explaining to your minds how effectually an ordinary procedure of your Honorable Body may tend to develop or mar a landscape:

"The petition of Edward W. Lincoln, a citizen of Worcester, respectfully represents and sets forth that, in the discharge of his duties upon the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, he could not but observe the defects in the routes of communication between the Eastern and Western portions of the City. That he has been painfully impressed with the fact that an ascent, with a moderate load, up any of our streets from Highland to Pleasant, is almost impracticable. That from Pleasant to Chandler the same obstacles are interposed to easy transit; Chandler Street itself, although greatly improved towards the West, being gorged at its junction with Main Street, by the close proximity of the O'Fallon Block and Trinity Church. That an opportunity is offered to remedy this evil, growing more excessive, as it rapidly will, by such

a wise addition to the width of Wellington Street, as shall supply an adequate outlet for any possible development of settlement or trade in the Western Wards of the City, an opportunity that may never again be presented :

That by properly widening said Wellington Street upon its Southerly side, great facilities will be afforded of access to the prospective Jaques Hospital, and also the Public Grounds of the City, sooner or later to include Newton Hill, and which, set on one side as they may appear, are yet almost exactly in the geographical centre of the City.

And your petitioner would further represent and set forth that any measure less comprehensive than that herein proposed, will result in trifling advantage, and cannot but prove utterly inadequate to meet the imminent urgency of the case.

And your petitioner would further urge that some consideration is due to the expressed feelings and wishes of the late George Jaques; and that the first action of the Municipality, preparing to avail itself of his munificence, should not be to lay ruthless hands upon the trees which he had planted, and tended, and held most dear :

And your petitioner avers that in Wellington Street, re-located and widened according to his prayer, there would be ample space for passage and re-passage upon either side of the trees; and that, in the comprehensive and grand sweep of such a highway, all difficulties of narrowness or acclivity would be merged and forgotten :

And your petitioner would further represent that additional and overpowering inducement to such relocation and widening lies in the fact that, upon its completion, a most admirable and appropriate site for the Soldiers' Monument becomes available, without increased expense to the City and to the rescue of our too diminutive Common from threatened ruin. Placed upon this location, environed, as it is, by spacious streets, and there would be room and verge enough for a procession on Memorial Day countermarching to encircle it; or for the mourners, bearing the remains of some loved comrade to either of our Southern Cemeteries, to pay it a marching, mortuary salute. Scarcely a material improvement can be suggested, fraught with equal possibilities of solid benefit. That you may have the wisdom to discern and the courage to realize them, will be the earnest prayer of your petitioner."

This whole subject is impressed upon the minds of this COMMISSION as of such momentous consequence that more of your attention has been invited to it than would be the case otherwise. Felling the trees upon the North side of Front Street was probably an imperative necessity. Only the most exacting parsimony can assume to justify a wholesale devastation of Wellington Street. With what grace can the City accept the bounty of George Jaques and then signalize its gratitude by a ruthless destruction of that majestic colonnade of trees, planted by his own hands, carefully tended and loved so well! What better monument does he need—those of us who knew him may well

ask what more appropriate monument would he wish—than that stately row of elms and maples, not a twig of which he, when living, sacrificed without reluctance? This Commission implores the Honorable Council to plant and not destroy, to set out new and not eradicate the old. Our sister cities of the West, are striving, under manifold discouragements, to adorn their wide avenues with plantations of exotic growth and nurture. As we commence to run the race of emulation, by requiring a suitable breadth for our streets, let us see to it that by no action of our municipality we rival the prairie in its nakedness; banishing the pride of our forests, to be sought on the shores of Lake Michigan or the banks of the Mississippi.

It is the earnest wish of this COMMISSION that no time may be lost in the planting of these AVENUES. The Charter is explicit, declaring it to be the “duty” of the Commissioners,—

“To cause such shade and ornamental trees to be planted in and upon said public streets and highways in said city as they shall think proper, and as appropriations shall be made therefor by the City Council.”

In the case of an ordinary street there would appear to be no cause for hesitation. But, in this instance the very breadth of the AVENUES demands that, for imposing effect and proper shelter from a fervid sun, ornamental or shade-trees shall occupy a prominent position. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would therefore recommend that the City Council proceed at once to define and establish a sidewalk, ten (10) feet in width, upon each side of the AVENUE, from the Holden Road to May Street. The action advisable to be taken preliminary to the adornment of QUINSIGAMOND AVENUE, modified materially as it must be by the close proximity of the Lake, can be determined better after its completion. At all events, nothing must be permitted to intercept or obscure the view over the water.

Sooner or later, may it be soon! QUINSIGAMOND AVENUE, outflanking the trend of the hills, shall invade Quinsigamond Village, and thence, skirting Mount St. James and Hope Cemetery, connect with its Western rival at Webster Square. Sooner or later, may it be at once! the extension of that AVENUE, following the line of Grafton or Harrington Streets, or such better route as more exact surveys may indicate, shall surmount

the South Eastern crest of the City, descending the ridge to the suburb of Quinsigamond, thereby effecting a speedier, perhaps the only practicable junction. Across from the Poor Farm, too, by Northville to Pratt Street, that the circuit may be complete. The AVENUE by the Lake is yet unfinished. But already the railway intersecting it and which, but for its own suggestion, would never have inspired the dreams of the wildest lunatic, conveys its thousands of passengers "into the country," where "no one needs" or cares to go. The time will come,—nor can its advent be too speedy! that will witness a realization of the plan originally proposed by this COMMISSION. That will behold the opponent of "wide streets leading out into the country" taking matutinal exercise around by the Sears Farm and Flagg Street; continuing up the old road to Tatnuck; and, turning sharply to the left, regaining his usual placidity of temper as he appreciates the beauties of a broader Mill Street. Pausing to wipe his heated brow beneath the shade of trees planted by this COMMISSION, and resting upon seats erected by it, he will wonder that hostility could ever have been so irrational and blind. The multitudes that saunter by in innocent enjoyment of their holiday, beholding him there, shall point him out to each other as the latest martyr to good intentions; who, having eyes, saw not, and occupying a position of singular possibilities of usefulness, failed to appreciate his opportunity.

But, then, the City is in debt! Who is not? Upon what but credit does the Federal Government exist to-day. And still both the Republic and the City have something, it is believed, to show for their expenditures. Certainly with our Water Rates we need not fear to compute the sum of our Water Bonds. Nor is that part of our municipal obligations arising from the construction of Sewers without its "dissolving view;" as fancy depicts the "Committee of Thirty-Five," in jovial procession, treading close upon each other's heels in eager solicitude for precedence in the privilege of casting shekels into the Treasury.

May we not for the moment, dismiss consideration of this annual bug-bear? The Municipal Election has occurred. Why then, put this chronic scare-crow aside until next December!

None of its virtues will be lost in retirement ; of that the average demagogue can rest assured. It has been exhibited too often in the civic arena, (and always effectively) for any distrust of its immortality. At least, let us not keep it forever before us as a warning ; because the men who advocated the wildest extravagance of the past feel a griping of the bowels when constrained, unexpectedly, to put their hands in their pockets. Let us no longer be frightened from our propriety, notwithstanding the mercenary wail of those who, asking and obtaining water and sewer, pavement and sidewalk, now blubber because their fellows cannot be made to foot the bills. As grown men, let us realize that we cannot eat our cake and keep it. His Honor has so ably vindicated this position that it would be a work of supererogation in the writer to say more. He has manifested to the veriest dullard that, if our liabilities have increased, so, in much greater ratio, have our resources. Why assume then to fetter our hands because the people of Worcester, seven or eight years ago, elected to wear shackles ? I may not favor the building of a complete system of Sewers ; nevertheless, I acquiesce without grumbling. Is it not my right to insist that the cost of those Sewers shall not be interposed as an insuperable barrier to my Avenue, or Reservoir, or other improvement, when I choose to propose them ? The City adopts a measure that requires a considerable expenditure. Knowing that the people are indifferent to the abuse of public credit, so long as their pockets are not actually levied upon, it is determined to issue bonds. The authority which thus decides is competent so to do. The constituency acquiesce, as is clearly their right. If, then, the people prefer to run in debt rather than to pay cash, it is simply a matter of financial policy that, once settled, need not forever haunt our slumbers.

The gist of it is : Worcester has some three million dollars, more or less, “put where they will do the most good.” Buried under the ground, if you will—*yet not in a napkin !* For that sum can be shown—value received. Should we now conclude to complete our circuit of AVENUES, acquire NEWTON HILL, and guard the Western side of the City with a Reservoir ; in other words, keep our municipal mechanism perfect by not allowing



its momentum to slacken for an instant; what dead and decaying generation shall challenge our right or impugn our wisdom?

This COMMISSION has indulged in no visions to mislead the unwary. Its suggestions have ever been the fruit of the most mature deliberation. Proposing only improvements of a material and substantial character, it has justified its action by explaining their close connection with the prospective appearance of the Worcester of the future. What may happen hereafter, should imagination run riot, it were profitless to anticipate. Perhaps the causeway across the Lake might be seen pierced by a series of inverted arches, in no wise obstructing travel, in every way facilitating the water course. Possibly a decree of the Honorable Council could be assumed, forever dedicating, to the free and unrestricted enjoyment and uses of the public, that tract of land lying South Easterly of the City Farm, which commands a view of the Lake throughout almost its whole extent. When, however, the municipal records begin to be cumbered with conveyances to the City of little parks and pleasure grounds contiguous to or bordering upon our new AVENUES, the members of the COMMISSION, assured that their task is certain of accomplishment because assumed by their fellow-citizens, will pray to be enrolled with the "goodly fellowship of the prophets."

In patient but sanguine anticipation of which auspicious period this Report is concluded, as it was commenced, for and in behalf of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Mass., January 26th, A. D., 1874.*



# BY-LAWS

## OF THE

### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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1. No person shall be suffered to affix, in any manner whatsoever, advertisements, handbills, placards, posters, or written or printed notices, to any of the Shade Trees of the City.

2. All persons are hereby forbidden—

To place any erection or obstruction on the Commons or Parks of the City.

To catch, trap or shoot Birds or take Birds' nests.

To injure, damage, destroy or dig up any turf, shrubs, trees or plants, or break up or destroy the surface of the Commons, or light any fire upon them.

To deposit any rubbish, manure, cinders, road sweepings, bricks, timber, building materials, or other substances, upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or in any pond or basin of a fountain in said Commons or Parks, or in any manner to fill up, defile, or pollute the same.

To place any carriage, cart, or other vehicle upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or upon the foot-paths over the same.

To fire any gun or other fire-arm, (except of the Militia of the Commonwealth), or throw any stick, stone, or other missile.

Or generally, to act in a disorderly manner, or to commit any nuisance, or do any act tending to disfigure or injure the Commons or Parks or annoy or hurt any person frequenting them for the purpose of exercise, recreation, or transit.

Under penalty of Five Dollars (\$5.00) for each offence, to be paid to the person whose testimony shall secure a conviction.

CITY CHARTER—Section 21.

\* \* \* \* And said Board may make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust not inconsistent with this Act and the Laws of the Commonwealth, as they shall deem expedient.

## MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES.

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1. No person shall ride, lead or drive any horse in or upon any inclosed Public Square or Common in the City of Worcester, except by the permission of the Commissioners of Public Grounds.

2. No person shall injure or deface any Fence around any Public Square or Common in said City.

3. No person shall, in any manner, carry or cause to be carried into any Public Square, Common, or place in said City, any dead carcase, filth, or any offensive matter or substance whatever, nor dig or carry away any of the sward, gravel, sand, turf, or earth in or from any Public Square or Common, except by permission of the Commissioners of Public Grounds ; and no person shall commit any nuisance on any public Square or Common in said City.

4. No person shall suffer any horse, ox, cow, grazing animal or fowl belonging to him, or under his care or keeping, to go at large on any Public Square or Common in said City.

5. No person shall dig up, cut down, climb, break, peel, cut, deface, injure, or destroy any Ornamental or Shade Tree, Shrub or Vine, growing and being in any of the streets or highways, or in any of the Public Lands of said City, without the consent of the Commissioners of Public Grounds first obtained therefor in writing.

6. No person shall tie or fasten any horse, ox, mule or team of any kind to any Ornamental or Shade Tree, Shrub or Vine, or to any fence or other thing erected for the protection of such Tree, Shrub, or Vine, in any street, highway, or public place in said City.

*Public Grounds of the City of Worcester*

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1874.

WORCESTER :

PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,

\* PALLADIUM OFFICE

1875

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~~1874~~  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1898.



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

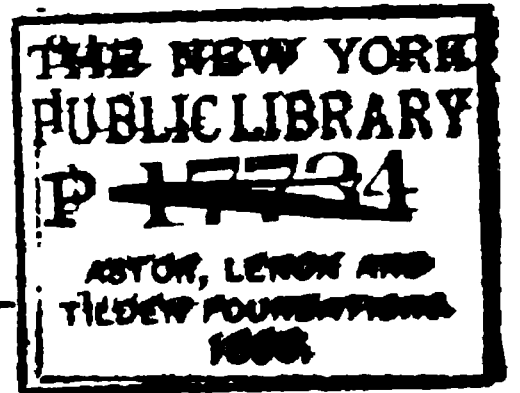
## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1874.



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WORCESTER :  
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1875.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To The Honorable CITY COUNCIL.*

THE provision in the City Charter which requires the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, “annually, in the Month of January, to make and render a report of all their acts and doings, and of the condition of the Public Grounds and shade and ornamental trees thereon, and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of receipts and expenditures for the same,” is respectfully complied with, by the submission of the following Report.

Premising, however, that, by the action of the HONORABLE COUNCIL, the tenure of office of the *Commissioners*, defined and determined by the Charter as “a term of Three Years,” has become reduced, through the irregularity or incertitude of election, by an abridgment of from two to three weeks. No especially grave consequences are to be apprehended: but it is perhaps worth our while, now that old things are passing away and all things becoming new, to maintain a decent conformity to Law. The Records of this COMMISSION disclose the fact that its Members are elected hap-hazard, whenever the inclination or temper of the HONORABLE COUNCIL disposes it to convene.

Thus the election in A. D., 1871, occurred upon January 30th.

In	"	1872,	"	"	"	22d.
"	"	1873,	"	"	"	20th.
"	"	1874,	"	"	"	12th.
"	"	1875,	"	"	"	4th.

A new member is entitled to recognition by his colleagues after he has taken the official oath. He may thus oust his predecessor before he has fulfilled his legal "term of Three Years,"—an operation of which the validity appears more than questionable. The month of January is allowed the Commission for the preparation of its Annual Report. The question might well arise, whether a member newly-elected was, by law, or should be suffered, a right to decide upon the acceptance and submission of a Report relative to matters whereof the density of his ignorance must be at least commensurate to the brevity of his service.

The Receipts and Expenditures of the Commission, during the past Financial Year, were as follows :

#### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

*In account with the*

CITY OF WORCESTER,

*Dr.*

Unexpended in A. D., 1873,	\$765 33
Highway Department, Damage to Fence, (Common),	2 50
Sales of Wood, (Park Avenue),	43 50
Rent of Elm Park, (Circuses, &c.),	300 00
Appropriation,	5,000 00
	<hr/>
	\$6,111 33

*Per Contra, Cr.*

Paid C. Hamilton, Printing Annual Report and Ballots,	\$ 60 45
" C. H. Perry, Pruning Trees,	54 43
" S. F. Shattuck, " "	27 15
" L. C. Kenney, Lumber,	4 36
" H. L. Prentice, Screenings for Sparrows, 1873-4,	8 )
" David Rowe, Labor on Common,	421 )
" John McCabe, "	79 )
" Frank Houston, "	82 )
" E. R. Fiske & Co., Advertising,	2 )
" Highway Department: "Out-Door Relief," Scrapings, Moving Boulder and Trees,	1,867 )



PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

<b>Paid</b>	<b>Kinnicutt &amp; Co., Varnishing Settees, Fountains, Bird-</b>	
	<b>Houses, &amp;c., &amp;c.,</b>	<b>115 19</b>
"	George T. Sutton, Pump and Plumbing,	47 65
"	John D. Lovell, Tools and Seed,	13 44
"	William McGrath, Laying Stone-Drain,	74 37
"	O. B. Hadwen, Trees and Planting same,	450 00
"	Mason & Lincoln, Iron for Tree-Guards,	32 34
"	James Draper, Shrubs, Trees, &c.,	116 95
"	Benj. C. Jacques, Labor and Stock,	260 53
"	Ames Plow Co., Tools, and Repairs to same,	16 40
"	Stephen Rowe, Labor,	227 49
"	John D. Baldwin & Co., Advertising,	75
"	M. R. Edwards, Plowing, Moving Dirt, Excavation	
	and Labor,	970 35
"	Michael McGrath, Spreading 10,000 yds. of dirt,	551 00
"	John Barnes, Transplanting trees, use of team, &c.,	45 50
"	C. C. Riley, Labor and Hauling Stone,	138 85
"	F. W. Cherrington, Seventy (70) perch of Stone,	70 00
"	John S. Ballard, Line and Reel,	1 50
"	S. E. Todd, Drain Tile, &c.,	132 30
"	A. P. Marble, Loam,	10 00
"	C. F. Henry, Manure,	70 44
"	D. Downey, "	47 83
"	J. B. Brooks, "	34 23
"	N. W. Holden, Screenings for Sparrows, (1874-5),	13 45
"	Jonas Hartshorn, Setting Trees, and Trees,	8 00

SUMMARY.

Resources,	\$6,111 33	
Expenditures,	\$6,055 33	
		<hr/>
Unexpended and Carried to account of 1875,		\$56 00

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, DR.,

In account with

*Legacy of* HON. LEVI LINCOLN : deceased.

Legacy,	\$940 00
Interest,	388 40

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\$1,278 40

PER CONTRA. CR.

<b>Paid</b>	<b>P. J. Turner &amp; Co., 4000 ft. Plank,</b>	<b>\$134 00</b>
"	M. R. Edwards, Excavation, Ditching,	
	Draining, Paving, and Sodding,	873 00
"	Technical Institute, Implements, &c.,	30 00

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\$1,037 00

Unexpended and Carried to New Account,	\$241 40
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The *Shade Trees* of the City, upon its highways and throughout the PUBLIC GROUNDS are in better condition than ever before. The systematic and vigorous pruning to which the larger and older Elms have been subjected for some years past, tended to restore that equilibrium of vital forces which had been impaired by work upon gutter or sidewalk. The injury occasioned by such severe amputation of the roots was measurably remedied and the labor and expense were quickly repaid in grateful shade and denser foliage. Much attention has been bestowed upon the protection of the young trees, of which an unusual number were planted within the last two years. The direct attachment of slats to the trunk, in all cases where it is of sufficient size, has approved itself as the cheapest and most effectual safeguard. It is believed that the limit of economy, in this respect, has been reached. Could a little more care be manifested, by the owners of estates paying some slight heed to that Ordinance which prohibits the "fastening of animals to any Ornamental or Shade Tree, or to any fence or other thing erected for the protection of such Tree," the work of this COMMISSION would be greatly reduced. A measure of precaution that would almost obviate any need of safeguards, might be found in an introduction to the Police Court of those reckless Jehus who race along our streets in their market wagons, destroying property and imperilling life or limb. To this cause alone may be ascribed two-thirds of the injuries to our *Shade Trees* resulting from abrasion.

One hundred and Eighty-One (181) Elms and Maples have been planted directly by the COMMISSION, and the legal allowance was made for quite a number of others which were set out by private enterprise. Guards have been affixed to those trees that appeared most to require them, upon the following-named streets:—Lancaster, Highland, Elm, High, Chandler, Chatham, Park Avenue, King, Kingsbury, Shrewsbury, Pleasant, West, Agricultural, Chestnut, Hollywood, Charlton, Loudon, Oak, Woodland, Cedar, Sever, Main, John, Linden, William, Walnut, and Shelby St. Place. There are on hand Twenty (20) large boxes of 12 slats each; Thirty-two (32) small boxes of 3 @ 4 slats each; and Three Hundred and Fifty (350) slats suitable and assigned for nailing directly to tree-trunks.

The Nursery of Elms and Maples that was started in 1872, upon the South-West corner of ELM PARK, by its thrifty condition, amply vindicates the sagacity of the COMMISSION. During the past season considerable labor has been expended in thinning them out to a proper distance, furnishing more and needed space for their shapely expansion. It cannot be a great while, in the ordinary course of nature, before the PUBLIC GROUNDS and streets of the City may derive from this source of supply all the *Shade Trees* that can be judiciously planted.

Some of the finest trees in ELM PARK, which have developed to size and symmetry; since that clearing-up of inarsh and swamp whereof the tradition daily grows more dim and the memory of which is retained by few; have been the prey of an insect—described by Harris as *Stenochorus (Elaphidion) putator*. He especially affects the OAK—the genus which, from its sluggish generation and tardy development, is hardly replaced and can least be spared. In the somewhat rough characterization of this Oak-Pruner, by one who had studied his subject and observed its ravages, we are taught that the “fellow would not be so very objectionable, if he did not prune too closely and had sense enough to know where the pruning was needed. But, like some senseless horticulturist, he slashes right and left, without any regard to beauty or symmetry, and down come the twigs, and sometimes quite large branches. The workman always falls with the twig and goes into the ground to pupate. It seems he has sense enough to look out for himself and fall with the twig. The means of preventing its increase is to gather and burn the prunings before the perfect insect comes out to lay eggs for another crop which it deposits in the axils of the leaves.”

The COMMON has required, and therefore received, a merely watchful oversight and jealous attention. The Paths had to be kept in good repair; the gutters to be cleaned; and the grass to be clipped as often as needed for the sake of a creditable appearance. Yet even this, with some other inevitable cares, demands the constant toil of a laborer, and a considerable amount of personal supervision on the part of this COMMISSION. It is believed that both were faithfully bestowed.

The Monument, to the Memory of our Soldiers who fell in

the late Civil War, was finally dedicated upon the spot selected by the appointed Committee, amid the waving of banners, the notes of martial music, and the inspiration of ever-welcome if familiar oratory. Beauty lent her charm to the occasion and Nature put on her fairest adornment. This Commission strove for years, with might and main, to enforce the location of that Monument upon some other site. After the final determination, by the *City Council*, that it should be placed upon the N. E. corner of the Common, no attempt was made to interpose any further obstacles. Instead, a cordial co-operation was tendered to the Committee, the pleasant results of which, it is trusted, were materially conducive to the felicitous consummation.

The grounds around the base of the Monument were necessarily left unfinished. This Commission did not deem it wise to assume the task of completion, with frost so imminent. The work however will be commenced in the coming Spring; and its creditable accomplishment is hoped for, although the problem is by no means of easy solution.

The *Fence* around the Common could not be in a worse condition. Rails are missing or broken, and even the stone posts are fractured. A long step has been taken towards a remedy for this state of things, which this Commission is powerless to change without more means than the *Honorable Council* is apt, in this hour of political penury, to appropriate for such a purpose. To quote from our last previous Report:—

“Early in the spring of A. D. 1873, this Commission, desiring that improvements in this respect should keep pace with the reclamation of the territory, petitioned the Honorable Council to set a substantial kerbstone along the line of Park Street, where there is none at present, said kerb being dressed to an acute edge atop, and rising six inches above the crown of the path inside. This kerb could be placed upon the existing stone posts, if thought advisable, they being broken off short for the purpose. If desired, an independent base might be used, rings being let into those posts to fasten animals thereto, so as to insure a more rigid blockade of the street. This request for a trial of what can scarcely be regarded as an experiment, is respectfully renewed. A commencement might well be made upon the north side of Park Street.”

This suggestion has been realized. When it was determined

to pave Park Street, in the Summer of 1874, the Highway Committee, which has recently done so much for the advancement and maintenance of our material prosperity, concluded to carry into effect the plan of this COMMISSION. The neat and substantial kerb which now adorns the Southern boundary of the Common, and retains its foot-path, will endure as a permanent memorial of their sound judgment. Though not quite a realization of the hopes of the COMMISSION, it is such an improvement upon the wreck that it replaces, that he must be a carping critic indeed who would find fault with its lack of artistic grace. As an act of simple justice to the Highway Committee it should be stated that some additional expense was incurred, over and above the cost of an ordinary street kerb-stone; because of the conspicuous position and public use for which it was designed. A claim for the sum of that excess was presented to this COMMISSION. Payment has been declined for sufficient reasons. One,—that although the fruit of its advice, this COMMISSION had made no estimate, asked no appropriation and of course, had got none. Another—that abutters are not charged with the expense of kerb-stones, and that even if they were, the City being the abutter upon both sides would merely put a stone in one end of its sack to counterbalance the grain in the other. But finally and most conclusive upon the Highway Committee, whose members are not wholly unfamiliar with financial straits, because this COMMISSION lacked funds! But the work was done, well and wisely; and should be paid for from the City Treasury, without the absurd legerdemain of a paper debit and credit between two municipal departments.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would most respectfully, but urgently, impress upon the *Honorable Council* the wisdom of continuing a work so successfully begun. Salem Square should not longer be tolerated as a public eye-sore. A decent regard should be had for simple appearance and some consideration manifested for the very respectable Religious Societies which have there planted their Houses of Worship. Has not the time come to stop the Wood and Hay,—matters of indispensable necessity but yet susceptible of regulation,—upon the outskirts of the City; at Lincoln and Webster Squares for instance where

facilities for measuring and weighing already exist. *Then*, a sufficient street being left open, the remainder of the Square could be restored to the COMMON, from which it was needlessly wrested; and the Eastern boundary completed as well as defined by a continuation of the new Ornamental Kerb. A speedy decision of this matter, which cannot be postponed much longer at any rate, would materially facilitate the labor imposed upon this COMMISSION of putting in good order the ground adjacent to the Soldiers' Monument.

The period of time wherein the South-Eastern branch of LAKE AVENUE is possible of construction, without subjection of the city to land-damages, terminates upon the Twenty-Second (22d) day of next September. The views of this COMMISSION have been expressed often enough to spare a necessity for their repetition. The actual execution of the work, so far as it has been accomplished; and so far will never be far enough until it attains completion; justifies faith and exceeds the hopes of the most sanguine. It is not a case of mining for precious metals; where the chance stroke of bar or pick may reveal a latent treasure of ore or nugget. Just a disclosure of the country;—too often and arrogantly neglected by officials who, in their superfluous revel of such urban luxuries as Gas, Pavement, and Sidewalk, forget that sub-urban enjoyments are restricted to kerosene and mud. This COMMISSION does not waver in its convictions, nor flinch from their open, seasonable and frank expression. It suggested the AVENUE around the City,—somewhat, to reduce and equalize the price of land; as much to encourage and induce the ownership and improvement of comfortable homesteads, (an acre or less,) by our mechanics, whose settlement, in turn, would occupy the roads; but, above all, as an apt and adequate justification of the protest, rapidly growing in popular appreciation, against those Gradgrinds of Materialism and the Ward-Caucus who are reluctant alike to concede a Golden Age heretofore or to anticipate enjoyment in the future Utopia.

“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous,  
There shall be no more Cakes and Ale?”

There are men living in Worcester who have purchased and own books of their own, but who submit, without a murmur. )

the virtual confiscation of their substance that the support and increment of a Public Library exacts. The same men, or others more numerous, buy Tripe or Turkey, (and which is a matter of taste,) of Alderman or Councilman indiscriminately; and are satisfied to pay for their dinners without applying the discs upon the tentacles of Trade to that exhausted receiver—the City Treasury. Let, however, a citizen, influenced by a sense of official responsibility or of private duty, advise a policy that may not promise immediate benefit, yet which is of certain ultimate advantage; and, if it will warrant the scintilla of a suspicion, that individual might ensue upon public gain,

“Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart,  
Little dogs and all,”

unite in a chorus of local and selfish denunciation. Dispensing with lavish profusion those Sewers, Streets and Sidewalks, to catch which their porringers were ever upturned, (than which the crumbs that fell from the table of Dives were craved less greedily), these men, who outshrieked the daughter of the horse-leech in her importunate cry of “Give! Give!” now that pay-day has come become at once hoarse as the screech-owl in their dissonant clamor of—“Pay as you go! or Go not at all!”

The precise location of the AVENUE by the *Lake* has been objected to: and it is urged that it should approximate the Water more nearly. But actual inspection, ~~in fact~~, will show that a *road-way* of the desired width could not be constructed, over the palisades, save at immoderate expense; and that it was wisdom, after all, not less than good taste, that dictated the much-abused bifurcation. But, after all, if the AVENUE is too far from the *Lake*, the *Lake* will undoubtedly approach the AVENUE; whenever the manufacturers in the valley shall exercise the rights which they are understood to have acquired, partially at least, of augmenting the volume of water by raising the dam. Our Municipal rights in and to the *Lake* are of usufruct, and can, in no degree be impaired by an increase of its volume. Instead, are they likely to be lost by the fatuous neglect to avail ourselves of a priceless benefit.

It has been charged by men of parts rather than brains, that



this system of AVENUES was designed for the display, and training to extreme speed, of fast horses. No accusation could be more unjust. The projectors of those broad AVENUES;—*Lake*, and *Park*, upon the East and West;—*Hope*, and *Faith*, to the South or North;—had higher and nobler aspirations. They looked forward to the possible development of civic enterprises; to the augmentation of private wealth,—*not their own*;—and generally to the betterment of the whole community. But the most sanguine never suffered himself to dream that the improvement of the Lake shore would be largely instrumental in causing the construction of a Railway, that has, within less than a single year, transported upwards of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand (150,000) passengers; or of steamboats, in whose pleasant excursions Twenty-Six Thousand persons (26,000) should find innocent recreation. Yet they disclaim, with pious indignation, the slightest anticipation, or even suspicion, of a self-denying ordinance that shall restrict the use of any or all of these AVENUES to the Horse and prohibit their enjoyment by the *Ass*!

No! if economy is actually desired and earnestly sought, its way, like the path of the righteous, will not be as straight or smooth as *Lake* or *Park* AVENUES, yet it may be discerned with ease. It will be found in individual frugality; in the practice of those minor virtues which, as they involve and require self-denial, we so often preach—to *others*. Municipal officers must cease interchanging visits;—pleasant doubtless;—but the cost of which rarely depletes the private purse. Citizens must relinquish that system of large-hearted and open-handed hospitality, (and they are giving it up fast enough!) which once characterized Worcester above all places in the Commonwealth. Our Wives and Daughters must discontinue the lavish use and wear of Satins and Silks, arrayed in which they do not even vie with the lilies of the field; and our merchants must cease to tempt feminine desire with such extravagant but needless raiment. In this way,—and so thoroughly,—may we get great gains that shall be useless; since they cannot be taken to the next world and parsimony is the novel and strange motto for this. Thus indeed can we realize the ideal of the modern Reformer. Thereafter shall Worcester, fallen with her leaders into the ditch of railroad investment,



emerge *without them*,—wiser, if not so clean as before. Thereafter shall we accumulate riches to submerge in Assurance Companies, not necessarily unsound of themselves, but failures notwithstanding less from the mis-location of policies than of brains. So shall our savings go to build Northern Pacific Railroads; or to purchase Denver City & St. Jo. Bonds, and those countless similar luxuries wherewith the Modern Financial Reformer delights to catch his gudgeons and—*add to the solid wealth of Worcester!* After all this, and in lack of other delusion, we shall have left, when the next crash comes, the satisfaction of ready, old scapegoats in Avenue, Sewer, and Water. True—we clamored for these latter; but so did the Jews for a King! And the pedigree of *our* Jews is unimpeachable. Having wasted our substance; scattering it broadcast from the sea coast to the Rocky Mountains, whithersoever there appeared even a nebula of cent-per-cent; how natural, as the dream of ill-gotten wealth dissolves, to decry those obligations that are simply the measure of reluctance to pay! Because the money that is earned at home is not spent at home. For the reason that our women go abroad for purple and fine linen, and our men put their money out at usury instead of into bricks and mortar. How easy to enjoy palpable, permanent benefits and—denounce their authors! Human nature changes slowly, if at all: and when, now as in the days of yore, “the grinders cease because they are few, and the doors are shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low;” may not the cause be latent in a lurking apprehension that the grist will be lost? The Toll due to the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS will be left to Time for collection.

This COMMISSION desires most earnestly to invite the attention of the *Board of Aldermen* to the whole subject of the moving of buildings through the public streets. For three successive years have questions arisen, not necessarily affecting the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS; as has been judicially decided; but which their fellow-citizens not unnaturally suppose to be included in its jurisdiction. During the year A. D. 1871, application was made to Mayor Earle for leave to move the house of the late William Brown through Pleasant Street. That most courteous gentleman and vigilant functionary inspected the route,

in company with the contractor, Mr. Babcock, and the Chairman of this COMMISSION. Finding that there were but Twenty-Five Feet (25) between the kerb-stones, Mr. Babcock declined to assume the responsibility of the damage inevitable upon the passage of so large a building as a whole. Here, the matter rested. Subsequently, during the official term of Mayor Verry, the desired permission was obtained, a condition being established that the house should be moved in sections.

But it was reserved for A. D. 1873, to see this matter brought to a head. During the Spring of that year the mansion of Hon. Isaac Davis was started upon its travels from that spot whereon it had so long rested—a conspicuous landmark. The obstruction to the chief, and *then* only, thoroughfare of the City was so great; and the injury to the limbs and at times trunks of trees such because of its mass, although in sections; that the demand became loud and incessant for a remedy. Such was promised, for the moment, by the intervention of the Horse-Railway Company. But that Corporation quickly decided that its track was occupied to better advantage than it would be were its own cars running, and therefore made “friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” Finally, at the instance and with the cordial co-operation of His Honor, Mayor Jillson, whom it is not too late to thank thus publicly, this COMMISSION applied to the Supreme Judicial Court for an injunction. It matters not whether the exact issue in this particular case was presented with sufficient precision; the action of the *Aldermen*, at the time, having been understood to be informal and void. The decision of the Judge, in chambers, covered the essential point of Jurisdiction, which was the main issue to be ascertained after all. That decision of Mr. Justice Morton, rescued from newspaper files, is inserted here that it may go upon record for the guidance of all concerned.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT—IN CHAMBERS, Aug. 12—MORTON, J.

*Edward W. Lincoln et al. vs. Benjamin W. Dean et al.*—This was an application by the Commissioners of Public Grounds of the City of Worcester for an injunction to restrain the defendants from moving a building through certain streets, upon the ground that it would injure and destroy certain side trees, under an ordinance of the city, which provides that no person shall dig up, cut down, or in any way injure any tree standing in the streets of the city without first getting the consent in writing of these commissioners, and they

claim that the defendants in violating this ordinance can be enjoined as prayed for. But the court deemed this a misapplication of their rights as commissioners on shade trees, that they might for the same reason ask to enjoin the mayor and aldermen from paving the streets, because it would injure and destroy the shade trees. The injunction was refused.

H. L. Parker for complainants; George F. Hoar for respondents.

The privilege of *felling* SHADE TREES existing in the sidewalks, which may appear to the purchaser of a building in his way, is not touched. Unless, therefore the *Mayor* and *Aldermen* shall claim to be participants in that "sole care, superintendence, and management of the shade and ornamental trees standing and growing in or upon any of the public streets and highways" of Worcester which, by the Charter is confided to the COMMISSION of PUBLIC GROUNDS; that annoyance will be endured by those who have hitherto tolerated it from a controlling sense of duty.

A. D. 1874, permission was given to Dr. Henry Clarke to move his dwelling-house, upon Chestnut Street, westward. It was but the toss of a copper whether he should buy a lot of land from the Chairman of this COMMISSION or the latter should buy the house. Ultimately,—the last named course was adopted; with an express understanding and covenant that Mr. Lincoln would receive the building, delivered upon his land by Mr. Benjamin C. Jacques. The Chairman of this COMMISSION stated, over and over again, that he would not suffer himself to be placed in a position that would preclude the faithful discharge of his duties to the city, so long as he held office. Well—the first section of the house was started to the extreme detriment of a horse-chestnut tree. Thereupon—in rapid succession, indignation meetings upon the kerb-stone, with informal congregation of *Aldermen*, and subsequent virulence in the press. Complaint had meanwhile been made by the Chairman of this COMMISSION to the City Marshal who found, upon careful investigation, that the sub-contractor, Mr. Benjamin W. Deau, was blameless in the premises; an ice-cart and a loaded team having driven over the well-secured chain that was used as a guy, thereby giving it a wrench that nothing could withstand.

An additional grievance appeared to consist in the selection of a route through Chestnut Street; and the question was asked,—why not go through Pleasant? To this the answer was, that the way

chosen was the nearest; by far the widest; and, beyond comparison, least obstructed by trees. It was an express stipulation of Mr. Lincoln that the route via Chestnut Street should be adopted, as he insisted that the good people upon Pleasant Street ought not to have their patience tried too often or severely. The municipal license had not insisted that the building should take an especial direction; and was it to "come betwixt the wind and" any "nobility" why not upon Chestnut Street! That the grievance was private, having no relation to public inconvenience, may perhaps be inferred from the fact that it is proposed to solicit leave to move a dwelling house upon Pleasant Street; in whose sale, as well as in the final disposition of the land whereon it now stands, some of those very gentlemen living upon or traversing Chestnut Street are presumed to take a pious share. Nevertheless, it has been found that many a man has moved buildings once, who never repeated the job. And it may well be that, in the particular instance under review, the first remuneration received by the Chairman for his investment, may take the shape of an invitation from our polite Collector and Treasurer to pay some more taxes.

His Honor, Mayor Davis (E. L.) who so recently presided over your deliberations with customary grace and innate suavity, remarked in his inaugural address that "as the period within which the City may take this property" (NEWTON HILL,) "extends two years from April 15, 1873, I have no desire to press the subject upon your attention now, being perfectly willing to abide the time when it shall naturally claim your consideration." Patience is a virtue, illustrated by none more conspicuously than by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. Nevertheless, the advice of the COMMISSION holds good; and its application is strengthened by reflection upon each peril escaped, every degree of cold that substitutes Ice for the fluid that should constitute our means of salvation. Incendiarism among wooden rookeries, on Pleasant or Main Streets, does not diminish our ever imminent danger if it promotes the discipline and efficiency of the Fire Department. This COMMISSION calls the attention of the *Honorable Council* to the fact that the two (2) years specified by the late Mayor will shortly lapse; and that the question to be determined is, what

sectional jealousy or private greed shall prevent the consummation of one of those plans for civic improvement which it is the fortune of few to advocate, and the lot of fewer still to achieve. This COMMISSION assumes as its own and gives renewed expression to the opinions advanced by its Chairman in the Joint Convention of both branches of the *Honorable Council*, upon the thirteenth day of last April.

“Must not the solution of the problem of our possible future exemption from a ruinous conflagration be found in an abundant supply of water and the amplest facilities for its immediate and direct application? It cannot be denied that the cheapest, simplest, and perhaps only effective method of supply must be sought in storage. The construction of reservoirs upon our hills will provide a partial remedy. The use of adequate and independent pipes, for the delivery of water from those reservoirs which might with propriety be termed our municipal safeguards, would complete it. A concurrence of untoward circumstances may render all precautions nugatory. But in the ashes of our burned city, and in the blank despair of our vanished prosperity, we should not have to reproach ourselves that all might have been avoided, had we but displayed the commonest prudence.

We have just had another serious warning upon how slight chances rests our immunity. What the loss was may be exactly computed. What it might have been, the imagination shrinks from depicting.

With such a hurricane as has blown throughout much of March, is it exaggeration to say that the flames would have been fanned into a fury that might have devastated the southern half of Worcester, ‘rolling up like a scroll’ those superb blocks that have lately arisen to adorn and enrich our noble Main Street! Every available means for the extinguishment of fires was employed. All that energy and skill could do was lavishly exerted. Yet it remains to be confessed that the flames, with everything in our favor, were simply confined to their original limits. Had everything been adverse, who shall define the limits within which they could have been restricted? That a conflagration, so located, should do no greater harm, is wonderful. That any future one should be allowed to become equally threatening, when its prevention, or quick suppression, is merely a question of dollars and cents, is a reflection upon your fitness to occupy these seats which my confidence in your sagacity and courage will not permit me to advance.

I shall not insult your intelligence by discussing the advantages of using gravitation as a method of extinguishing fires. Were

argument needed by this Honorable Council, thus specially convened, I might safely leave it to the expert mechanics of whom our City is full and whose competent representatives are present to-night. I take the principle of gravitation, and its convenience of employment for granted.

Need I repeat here, and to this convention, the geographical reasons in favor of availing ourselves of Newton Hill, to protect the three western wards of the City? Must I state again that its summit is six feet above the level of high water at Bell Pond; or call your attention over and over again to its proximity to the Oread, the Jaques Hospital, or the Technical Institute? All that has been told and reiterated even to wearisomeness. Your constituents made it a reality, and have empowered you to give practical effect to their decision, at the polls.

Is there a valid reason why you should not? If Newton Hill could be obtained for nothing the opportunity would be eagerly seized. But that, nor aught else, can be procured gratuitously in these days. If then, a price must be paid for it, (and that it must your application to the General Court concedes), may not its amount be measured somewhat by the object to be attained,—the security of a city from destruction and the consequent paralysis or entire annihilation of its material prosperity! Burn down the western half of our City, and the goats of Wards Two and Four may browse unmolested around their deserted railway stations. Upon the precise measure of the value of that Hill, I do not dwell, as it is a matter for your determination. For any unreasonable demand you have secured a remedy from the Legislature.

One thing must not be overlooked in this connection. Should that hill, passing from you, be sold, graded, and built upon, you would be obliged to force water up the ascent for the supply of the residents at great expense, in inadequate amount, and with diminishing head; laying down pipes that would be a further drain upon what is already insufficient. Without a reservoir, you expend force. With one, you accumulate it.

But it will be contended, why not avail ourselves of the High Service (so-called), taking the water directly from the main? To this the answer should suffice in homely but expressive phrase, that it “puts too many eggs in one basket.” The large, eastern main has proved impotent, once at least, within a very recent period, subjecting the entire city to extreme danger for many days in succession. Such peril is too great to be suffered for. But it so happens that the risk of fracture, with the consequent interruption of the supply, is most imminent precisely when our need is exacting. A pipe is never so liable to fail as when the



column of water is disturbed—when the stream is let on, or shut off. The strain upon the metal, at such moments, is that of percussion, disintegrating the fibre and granulating the particles. Doubtless you all have noticed this effect upon the service pipes at your homes, causing annoyance and trouble which is often wrongly attributed to the innocent plumber. The safety of a city cannot be too carefully guarded. A reservoir upon Newton Hill would be elevated enough to protect the highest points of land upon Chestnut or Harvard Streets; and that is all which could be required. Your mains, radiating from it, would gain in strength, because their number would admit of a diminution in size. The reduction of power by miles of friction is saved. And while it is not likely that hose can be manufactured, at a reasonable price, strong enough to withstand the full head from Leicester, there can be no question that the hose in common use, has endured the utmost pressure from Bell Pond—an elevation almost as high as that of Newton Hill. The principle of gravitation, with its system of reservoirs as a corollary, enables you to dispense with the purchase and maintenance of costly steamers and their more expensive equipment. Reliance upon a High Service, without the reservoirs, necessitates the steamers; since no city like Worcester can afford pipes stout enough, because of sufficient capacity, to contend directly with a sweeping conflagration. And it is this possible wholesale destruction against which provision has to be made without delay.

Still—say some—why take the whole Hill. Why not construct a reservoir upon the level area of the summit and be content with that? To this, the sufficient and conclusive reply is, that distributing pipes must radiate from the summit, in all directions; otherwise, the very purpose of a reservoir is thwarted and made ineffectual. Access must be had to those pipes when repairs become necessary. It must remain a hill to retain its value for the purposes of a reservoir; and, being a hill, cannot be arbitrarily graded or cut down by those who would continue its proprietors. Not a cellar would be dug, since any excavation might intercept or frustrate the water-mains. Its occupation, like its ownership, must be exclusive. Yet should its acquisition by the city, for the purposes of a reservoir, result in the consolidation of its possession with that of Elm Park, the consummation would be none the less desirable.

I believe that improvement upon a broad and generous scale, everywhere and in all parts of our extended territory, is the wisest policy—the truest economy. Yet even before liberal expenditures for easy chairs or tuneful pianos, in our schools: aye, sooner than prudent and far-sighted appropriations for wide and

stately avenues, (and no one more highly approves of them or will advocate them more zealously !) should be our precaution for the preservation of our homes, without which schools were a superfluity : our care for the security of that property upon which we have to depend for the means wherewith to defray the cost of highway, sidewalk, and sewer.

The whole subject is in your hands for final disposition. Having devoted much time and thought to its consideration, I am firmly persuaded that, while no merely human precaution can ensure perfect security, the closest approximation to it is to be found in the system here outlined. Were the protection of my own home, solely, at stake, no word of mine would have disturbed your counsels. But, realizing, as I have been compelled to do more vividly than ever, by the destruction of that temple in which I have been privileged to worship for upwards of a quarter of a century, upon how frail a chance the permanence of our municipal prosperity depends, I should have proved recreant to my convictions of duty as a citizen, had I failed to impress upon you my own profound sense of the imminent peril, at the same time indicating what, in my judgment, is the obvious, feasible, and effective remedy."

A great deal of loose talk, emanating from looser tongues which dispense ignorance and misrepresentation with almost miraculous impartiality, impeaches the honesty of this project for the acquisition of NEWTON HILL; to be used for a reservoir; and to be annexed to Elm Park, whose enlarged territory would even then sparely compete with the superb, natural Water-Park upon the Eastern line of the city. For such objects, upon equitable terms, and at a more reasonable price than has yet been mentioned, the Western Wards might well assume, if they did not greedily require betterments; thereby saving themselves from the construction of sewers, gas-mains, and streets, with their inevitable concomitant of frowning *chapelles d'aisance*,\* rising tier upon tier, spoiling the landscape and confronting the view for evermore.

But still there is a "Ring !" When a boy cannot whip another of his own size, he can make wry faces at his sister. The Chairman of this COMMISSION disclaims being annular, but deems it impossible that he may be

"totus, teres, atque rotundus."

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\*Perhaps a translation is not necessary!



His fellow-citizens will pardon a little pedantry, as the High-School House wherein he obtained his knowledge of alien languages cost them little; occupying but a single teacher and being worthless as a building.

Yet,—more seriously: cannot the Departments of our Municipal Administration be conducted with fewer imputations of corruption? The Reports of this COMMISSION have often commented freely upon divers and distinct branches of civic service. But in them all was there ever a denial that the dishonesty, or even profligacy, so often charged, had been or could by possibility be detected.

The opinion of the COMMISSION that the acquisition of NEWTON HILL, by the city, is a measure of exceeding importance to the permanent interests of the whole community, not only remains unchanged but has continually strengthened. Having never justified the payment of an exorbitant price, it would not advise such payment now. It took the precaution, in connection with Mayor Earle and Solicitor Nelson, to guard the interests of the city, when application was made to the General Court for a concession of Eminent Domain: and it occupies the same position at present. But, “if there are blind, leaders of the blind;”—is that a good and sufficient reason why the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS should “fall into the same ditch?” Better far to act as engineer than brakeman!

Intimations have been thrown out that the proprietors of that HILL would be willing to accept a less sum than has been asked heretofore. If such is the fact, it would seem to be a simple act of courtesy that any such reduction of terms should be communicated to the *Honorable Council*. This COMMISSION, at the request of the *Council*, has thrice solicited information as to the lowest terms upon which NEWTON HILL could be purchased. Should any change have occurred, modifying former estimates of value, it can scarcely be deemed derogatory to proprietary dignity for once to volunteer the knowledge.

In the Report of this commission, A. D., 1870, occurs the subjoined passage:

“The entire bulk of Manure from the city stables is now delivered upon the Poor-Farm, being hauled some two (2) miles

or more beyond the Common which is starving for lack of it. If the collection of offal were so systematised, as to be rendered available for the support of a Piggery upon that Farm, as it should be, an existing evil would be converted into a source of profit. Sufficient Pork would be gained for the supply of that meagre table, so strenuously insisted upon by the City Fathers, at their annual Dinner: and a portion of the manure from the city-stables might be spared, to stay the complete impoverishment of the Public Grounds."

The policy, then and so suggested, was since adopted by the city; and by its practical operation with its sanitary consequences, its primitive advocates are fully vindicated. The offal is collected promptly and cleanly; even if it must be confessed that, in some extremely hot days, the ferment, left purposely uncovered, exhales a perfume which scarcely suggests—

"the spicy breezes  
Blow (ing) soft o'er Ceylon's Isle."

Nevertheless the Offal is collected and—the City "goes the whole Hog." Even the succulent spare-rib is not wanting when farmer Farwell (alas! that we must so soon cry Far (e) well!) receives his official visitors and, between brown-bread and sausage, complacently accepts compliments upon Pauper-fare! But the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS declines the soft seduction and, "sitting on the ragged edge" of hope deferred weeps over the pungent heaps of compost that it possesses in suggestion only. In spite of all, Manure is not forthcoming from the City-Stables. Almost nineteen centuries have elapsed since it was proclaimed that—

"To him that hath it shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath."

This COMMISSION is not querulous. It neither seeks nor maintains controversy with those who are appointed and presumed to mend our ways. It takes things as it finds them, which is occasionally pretty rough. It pursues the even tenor of its way, as is its wont; surmounting all obstacles, climbing over where it cannot go around the lopped limb and prostrate trunk; and eyeing without audible murmur, even if askance, the wholesale devastation. It foregoes the Manure and hankers not after the Offal. But it expects to be esteemed very magnanimous when it condones the unauthorized felling of a noble elm; that stood, eminent: and

erect, in the gorge of a highway, for a period contravened by the memory of few living men; which caused no fear while the roadway was but thirty feet broad but, upon its being widened to eighty feet, inspired panic terror, and was therefore as summarily as furtively doomed. "We have a half-dozen sharp axes!" overheard a pair of convenient ears.

The grading and general improvement of the COMMON being substantially finished; and the *Honorable Council* not having supplied funds for the construction of that *JET D'EAU* which would be so fit a complement of its ornamentation; the COMMISSION improved the opportunity afforded by the interruption of its ordinary labor, through the erection of the Soldiers' Monument, to commence the work upon ELM PARK which had been deferred, with greater or less excuse, for a generation.

Previous thereto, however, the *Honorable Council*, moved by a desire to relieve suffering when it could be done consistently with public interest, had, upon the 2d day of February, at the request of this COMMISSION, adopted an Order in manner and form following, to wit:

"*Ordered*,—That the Joint Standing Committee on Highways be, and they hereby are, authorized, with the concurrence of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to cause the earth to be excavated and spread, in ELM PARK, in such places and to such extent, as said COMMISSION shall direct: the expense not to exceed Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) and to be charged to the appropriation for Shade-Trees and Public Grounds, when such appropriation shall be made."

Pursuant to this *Order*, idle laborers were set at work by the Commissioner of Highways, and were diligently occupied for some weeks. The intention of this COMMISSION has been expressed, in former Reports, of so combining the system of drainage, in the PARK, that might be found indispensable, with the formation of a basin or Ornamental Pool at the head of the Sewer, as to receive and maintain at a suitable level any water that should flow into it from surface or under-drains. Accordingly this labor thus supplied by the City, was so directed, succeeding under manifold obstacles of frost, mire and water, in the removal of something like Ten Thousand Yards of clay and peat. This mass was so saturated with moisture, freezing as it fell from the wheel-barrows, that it could not be spread at the time.

Neither was it until months later, when a contract was made with Mr. Michael McGrath who had no occasion, and it is with a little inclination, to boast of the profits of the job. It was found from top to bottom of the entire heap, causing great expense and loss to the contractor, who naturally anticipated no obstacles during the heats of summer. *Park Avenue* had to be finished; so that this COMMISSION could put the dirt "to do most good," sloping the sides of the *Avenue* as the *Park* in an embankment which, without such graduation, would be awkward and uncomfortably precipitous. In this way labor and material can be expended wisely, in this direct manner the work can be done at odd moments, and it will continue the motto of the COMMISSION as it was ever, to make little waste that there may be less waste.

The anticipations of the COMMISSION are more than realized in the appearance and utility of the *Pool*, as it will be officially furnishing as it does superior facilities for draining the *Park* by reflecting the eye when sparkling with water, as it may always be after it is completed; and enabling the little boys and girls to frequent it, to enjoy a cheerful, and above all safe, place to resort for skating. Sufficiently enlarged, as it should be, if the designs of the COMMISSION are realized, and it will constitute beyond all question the chief ornament and attraction of that PUBLIC GROUND. For the purpose is also to place a *Jet*, the iron castings of which are already in possession; and operating it upon Public Holidays, should the supply of Water be stored up at the time admit of its use for such end and occasions.

Great attention has been bestowed upon the proper direction of the *Walks* requisite to afford easy access to the various portions of the *Park*. In cases where it would obviously be traversed by persons on their way to and from meals, and to whom each moment of time is an object, the straightest course was adopted. In others, especially when suggested by the slope or trend of the land, a more deviating route was adopted, presenting an admirable chance to be improved by planting, here and there, in places, flowers and trees. It is believed that a *Walk* will be essential, to render

to every other. All that have been laid out were first ploughed, and then thoroughly spaded over, the courses being first defined by bounds and metes set by the Commission. They will be covered with a top-dressing of Gravel, extensive beds of which have been found, as anticipated, upon the ridge that was cast up by the waves of the lake or river, that unquestionably, at some period not very remote, covered the whole western valley of the City. Twenty-Five Hundred (2500) Lineal Yards of *Walks* or *Path-Ways*, have been constructed; or One and Forty-Two Hundredths ( $1\frac{42}{100}$ ) Miles. In every instance, where insuperable obstacles did not prevent, they were staked out and worked to a width of Twelve (12) Feet; a measure ample for pedestrians, to whose use they are restricted. With an exception of the preliminary ploughing, the entire labor has been performed by two (2) men, at odd times, one only executing the major portion.

A number of Maples (*Acer Saccharinum*) have been thinned out from the Nursery at the S. W. corner of the Park and planted by the sides of such Paths as were seasonably prepared. A less number of Elms occupy conspicuous positions in lower and wetter places, for which they are better adapted by Nature in their capacity to absorb moisture, thereby saving so much artificial drainage. This work will be resumed as soon as the Frost leaves the ground. Very many Ornamental and Flowering Trees and Shrubs have also been set out, with such view to effective contrast, yet agreeable repose for the eye, as a somewhat careful study of an imperfectly developed landscape could dictate. Changes will doubtless be required; but change is the lot of all things whereof man has positive knowledge. Those Trees and Shrubs appear to be in fair condition, at this time of writing, although the drought was hard upon them, and their vitality suffers for lack of that Manure from the Equine Factory of the City to which reference is made elsewhere in this Report. Snow in quantity will remedy even that needless deficiency, supplying a warm blanket, ammonia, and penetrating moisture. Nevertheless the chief danger to be apprehended is from the cold, cutting winds of March, which sweep over that plain like the wild "Northers" of our far Territories, blighting generation and withering life. Yet the chances must be taken.

A list of the Trees and Shrubs, planted by the Commission, is appended for more exact comprehension and permanent record:

## TREES.

NUMBER.	COMMON NAME.	BOTANICAL NAME.
Six (6),	European Weeping Ash,	<i>Fraxinus excelsior pendula.</i>
Ten (10),	Arbor Vitæ,	<i>Thuja Americana.</i>
Six (6),	" " (American),	" <i>Hoveyi.</i>
Six (6),	" " (Siberian),	" <i>Siberica,</i>
Thirty-Six (36),	Spruce (Norway),	<i>Abies excelsa.</i>
Twelve (12),	Pine (White),	<i>Pinus strobus.</i>
Six (6),	" (Austrian Black),	" <i>Austriaca.</i>
Six (6),	Spruce (Hemlock),	<i>Abies Canadensis.</i>
Twelve (12),	Larch,	<i>Larix Europæus.</i>
Six (6),	Elm (Camperdown),	<i>Ulmus Pendula (Camperdown)</i>
Six (6),	Willow (American Weeping),	<i>Salix Americana pendula,</i>
Ten (10),	" (Kilmarnock), "	" <i>caprea</i> "
Six (6),	Maiden-Hair,	<i>Salisburia adiantifolia.</i>
Ten (10),	Yellow-Wood,	<i>Virgilia lutea.</i>

## SHRUBS.

NUMBER.	COMMON NAME.	BOTANICAL NAME.
Four (4),	Snowball,	<i>Viburnum opulus.</i>
Twenty (20),	Deutzia (Slender-branched),	<i>Deutzia gracilis.</i>
Three (3),	White Fringe,	<i>Chionanthus virginica.</i>
Three (3),	Syringa (Mock-Orange),	<i>Philadelphus grandiflora.</i>
Three (3),	Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora,	Botanical name in common use.
Six (6),	Sweet-Scented Shrub, or Allspice,	<i>Calycanthus.</i>
Ten (10),	Deutzia (Crenata flore pleno),	Botanical name only used.
Twenty (20),	Weigela rosea,	" " " "
Fifty (50),	Japan Quince,	<i>Cydonia Japonica.</i>

The Commission considers the work of reclaiming *Elm Park*, at last, fairly under way. How far and how fast it shall be prosecuted must depend upon the action of the *Honorable Council*. The Charter provides that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS:

" Shall lay out said Public Grounds, or such part thereof as they shall at any time to time judge proper; and it shall be the duty of said Commission, from time to time, as appropriations shall be made therefor by the City Council, to cause all necessary paths and avenues to be constructed thereon, and to cause said Public Grounds to be planted and embellished with trees as they shall think proper"; &c., &c.

Much has been achieved in the prescribed direction: much more remains to be done. The COMMISSION has not suffered itself to be hurried into rash and wasteful extravagance, notwithstanding complaint and criticism; much of it selfish; some of it cowardly and anonymous; and all of it unintelligent or prejudiced. Pursuing the even tenor of its way, it has elected to be governed by no arbitrary "plan"; but rather to guide its action by a deliberate and life-long study of the land—its capabilities and needs. The City—whatsoever it may get—has had no requisition upon the Treasury for elaborate crotchet, or pretty conceit, from architect or engineer. It gets that to which it was entitled, without pay and without price: it might be added,—without fear or favor. Having reflected seriously and late;—too late as the impatient thought who recked not of the obstacles to action; the COMMISSION at length sees a clear way to the execution of its conceptions,—the matured evolution of its inner consciousness, *in more Germanico*. Blame the COMMISSION, if you will, for eschewing an elaborate and formal "plan"! But nevertheless admit, as you must, that the substitute whereby it elects to work—its head—is level!

"Consider the Words of the PREACHER: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.'"

All which is Respectfully submitted: for and in behalf of the  
COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS;

*by*

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, January 25th,  
A. D. 1875.*





*Citizens' Exchange  
from  
E. W. L.*

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

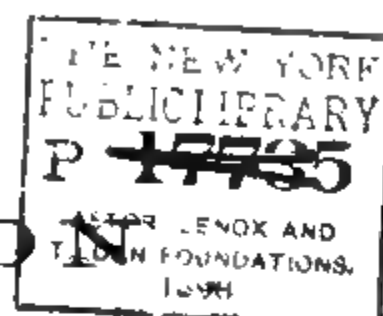
YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1875.

WORCESTER.

PRINTED BY CHAS. HAMILTON,

PALLADIUM OFFICE.

1876.





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

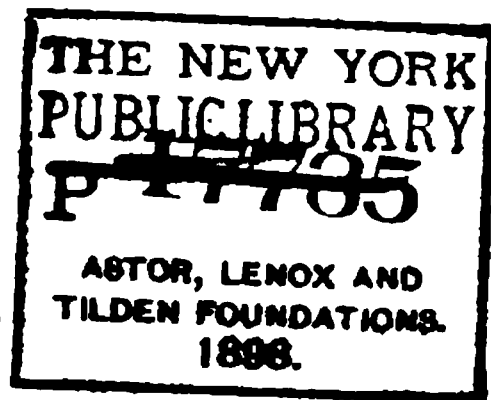
## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1875.



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WORCESTER:  
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1876.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To The Honorable CITY COUNCIL.*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, conforming to the requirements of Section 21 of the Charter of the City, has the honor to submit the following "Report of their Acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon, and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of receipts and expenditures for the same," during the past financial year.

The Receipts and Expenditures were as follows :

### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

*In account with*

CITY OF WORCESTER.

*Dr.*

Unexpended in 1874, (brought forward);	\$ 56 00
Appropriation,	4,000 00
Revenue :	
Circus (Howe & Cushing),	100 00
Circus (Murray's),	100 00
Stephen Harrington (Sale of old Logs),	3 00
Loan of Roller,	75
Grass on Elm Park,	35 00
Earth from Common, (M. McGrath),	24 00
To Credit of Elm Park,	241 40
	<hr/>
	\$4,560 15

*Per Contra, Cr.*

Paid Account of James Draper, Shrubs, Trees, &c.		\$241 40
Highway Department, old acct. of Dec. 22, 1874,		7 00
Jan.	2, Steven Rowe, labor,	39 38
"	Henry Forney, labor,	24 01
"	Charles Hamilton, printing,	2 25
"	5, David Rowe, labor,	34 30
Feb.	3, Steven Rowe, labor and tools,	44 49
"	Kinnicutt & Co., tools,	9 00
"	William A. Hill, work,	1 50
"	Chas. H. Doe & Co., advertising, "mischief,"	1 50
"	Henry Forney, labor,	37 00
M'ch	2, Steven Rowe, labor and paid for team,	36 74
"	3, Henry Forney, "	33 00
April	3, Steven Rowe, "	41 98
"	Charles Hamilton, printing Annual Report,	42 59
"	Michael McGrath, use of team,	5 00
May	6, John Barnes, labor and manure,	30 50
	James Downey, manure and hauling,	10 75
"	A. B. Lovell, cement and sand,	3 45
"	William Lee, labor and team,	3 00
"	Benj. C. Jaques, labor, stock, and loam,	91 24
"	David Rowe and help, labor,	49 00
"	Steven Rowe, labor,	43 75
"	C. F. Henry, manure and hauling,	41 25
June	4, Michael McGrath, earth and teaming,	39 49
"	John Dempsey, labor,	15 75
"	Benj. C. Jaques, labor and stock, for tree guards.	43 34
"	Steven Rowe, "	45 50
"	Kinnicutt & Co., lawn mower, &c. &c.,	27 77
"	John D. Lovell, tools &c.,	10 17
"	Wor. Water Works, cement,	1 85
"	John S. Clark & Son, lime,	1 50
"	Highway Department, carting scrapings,	183 00
"	F. C. Thayer, trees,	10 00
"	John D. Baldwin & Co., advertising,	3 50
"	David Rowe, labor,	52 00
July	6, Highway Department, scrapings and labor on Boynton Street,	43 40
"	Benj. C. Jaques, iron, wood, stock and labor,	72 71
"	John Barnes, carting,	7 00
"	Steven Rowe, labor,	42 )
"	Downey Bros., loam,	57 )
"	Water Works Department, labor on Common,	4 )
"	Fred'k H. Hammond, labor on Elm Park,	35 )
"	John D. Baldwin & Co., advertising,	5 )
"	Wellington Keith, labor as per pay roll,	61 )

## PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

July	6,	James Draper, shrubs and trees,	153	70
"		Engineer's Department, $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.	25	00
"		David Rowe, labor,	48	00
"		John D. Lovell,	5	26
"		W. W. Cook, shrubs,	12	00
Aug.	4,	Wellington Keith, labor as per pay roll,	22	50
"		Mason & Lincoln, iron,	12	60
"		Samuel F. Shattuck, pruning,	9	60
"		Gas Light Co., re-location of lamps on Common,	20	20
"		Kinnicutt & Co., tools and sharpening lawn mower,	4	28
"		Geo. T. Sutton, labor and materials, (pumps),	18	50
"		David Rowe and assistant, labor,	63	75
"		Steven Rowe, labor,	42	00
"	5,	J. S. Clark & Son, cement,	1	63
"	6,	Hugh McLaughlin, beach-stones, freight, and paving 678.13 lin. yds. of gutter,	736	40
"		Geo. Percy Daniels, $\frac{7}{8}$ mos. eng.	10	00
"		G. H. Palmer, $\frac{1}{8}$ mo. eng.	10	00
"		O. B. Hadwen, trees and setting,	166	00
"	16,	C. A. Colby, cleansing monument,	15	00
"	24,	M. R. Edwards, manure and teaming,	86	00
Sept.	3,	Charles H. Perry, pruning,	27	84
"	6,	Steven Rowe, labor,	42	87
"		Michael McGrath, labor and teams,	34	62
"		Kinnicutt & Co.,	1	00
"		Fred'k H. Hammond, labor and teams,	54	90
"		Samuel F. Shattuck, pruning trees,	6	00
"		Downey Bros., labor and teams,	28	75
"		Benj. C. Jaques, stock and labor,	64	50
"		David Rowe, labor,	46	50
"		John D. Lovell, seed and tools,	28	45
Oct.	4,	Samuel F. Shattuck, pruning,	34	35
"		David Rowe, labor,	42	00
"		Fred. H. Hammond, labor and teams,	15	30
"		Michael McGrath, labor and teams,	141	87
"		Steven Rowe, labor,	45	50
"		James Draper, trees, &c., &c.,	97	00
"	5,	John Dempsey, labor,	5	26
"	8,	Percy Daniels, eng. grades around Monument, $\frac{1}{6}$ mo.	20	83
"	27,	John Doyle, loam,	77	00
Nov.	5,	Steven Rowe, labor,	43	75
"		David Rowe, labor,	45	50
"		Downey Bros., manure and hauling,	40	50
"		Samuel F. Shattuck, pruning,	4	50
"		John D. Lovell, barrow,	2	75
"		Kinnicutt & Co., tarred rope,	1	13
"		Michael McGrath, labor and teams,	88	50

Dec. 3,	Edw. R. Fiske, paper and printing,	9 50
"	John B. O'Leary, repairs of tools,	1 95
"	J. B. Brooks, manure and hauling,	24 37
"	C. F. Henry, manure and hauling,	41 25
"	O. B. Hadwen, trees and setting,	27 60
"	Steven Rowe, labor,	42 00
"	Downey Bros., loam and teaming,	42 00
"	Michael McGrath, labor and teaming,	110 25
"	Geo. T. Sutton, work on pumps,	5 00
" 4,	J. & J. A. Rice, shovels,	5 20
"	N. M. Hardy, manure and hauling,	16 00
"	David Rowe, labor,	49 50
		<hr/>
		\$4,506 43
Dr.		4,560 15
		<hr/>
Balance,		\$ 53 72

Mindful of the present tendency to economy in theory if not practice, the COMMISSION will strive for unwonted brevity. Individual labor and the public patience will be saved thereby, not to enlarge upon the charge for printing.

The work of grading around the Soldiers' Monument, necessarily left incomplete in 1874, was resumed at the earliest possible moment. An open esplanade commended itself as the most feasible mode of disposing of the space: having in view the absolute need of accommodating the vast number of pedestrians, who cannot afford to be impeded; and the tender curiosity of those who love to approach closely and scan the names so durably recorded. Anxious that the work should be permanent, a deep excavation was effected, which was subsequently filled up with that waste material from the Washburn Iron Works, for the gratuitous use of which so many of our citizens have continual cause to be grateful. Listening however to a well-meant suggestion, the COMMISSION went further and fared worse. An offer of marble dust or grit was accepted, which, hauled and spread in profusion upon the more important walks, answered the purpose for a time most admirably. But with the advent of frost at thaw the "soil" upon the Common ceased to be longer "free attaching and adhering with more than the fabled closeness *Pallida Mors* to the defunct African. The rottenness of the Winter at this present time of writing, imposes upon the COMMISSION



an unexpected, but none the less imperative, task. Robbing Peter to pay Paul, they have conveyed frequent and large loads of gravel from *Elm Park*, by the use of which it is believed that the worst nuisance of mud has been effectually suppressed. Yet the suggestion is made to the *Honorable Council* whether the main walks, across and along the *Common*, are not in such incessant and universal use as to justify the employment of some durable material for their pavement. Such the *Commission* do *not* consider concrete, which would be objectionable also because of its baneful effect upon the Shade-Trees. Good brick has every advantage. It should be understood, however, that no estimate has been submitted for pavements; and that an appropriation for that especial purpose would be required, should the suggestion approve itself to the *Honorable Council*.

Opportunity was seized, in the progress of grading around the monument, to widen the more important paths. The gutters were also enlarged and supplied with outlets of increased capacity. When the Railway-tracks are taken up, after the 1st day of June, it will be possible to finish all surface work now contemplated. Those Tracks were availed of however to transport over them, swiftly and cheaply, the amount of Beach-Stone that it was supposed would be wanted hereafter. These will be used to construct gutters along each side of the broad mall that should replace the railways. Such a mall will be a municipal convenience, should a possible economy conclude to locate the City Hall of the future,—whose construction is an inevitable if remote necessity, within the quadrilateral space between Front, Main, and Park Streets, which is now encumbered and not conspicuously adorned by the present Hall and the Meeting House of the First Parish. Ceasing to be unclean would not interfere with the land remaining Common. Perhaps the ridiculous title of Central Park might be officially altered, as it was long since suffered to fall into disuse; and, with an almost precise similarity of situation, we might, like our fellow-citizens of Philadelphia, possess a Centennial Hall fronting upon Centennial Square.

In course of excavation around the Monument, it was discovered that its foundation had been imperfectly constructed; and was such as no competent builder would esteem sufficient for

a decent dwelling-house. This fact, obvious to all passers-by, was communicated to the *Honorable Council* in a note that is copied in this connection, because of harsh language vented upon the Chairman of this *Commission* by some whose vigilant discharge of duty, in the outset, would have saved trouble and expense :—

“ COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

June 28, 1875.

*To the Honorable City Council :*

The undersigned would respectfully invite the attention of the *Honorable Council* to the character and condition of the foundation of the Soldiers' Monument, as disclosed by the excavations which have been commenced for the purpose of grading and improving the grounds circumjacent.

In many instances the stones have no bearing upon each other; were never bound or tied together; but appear, when laid down, to have been hastily covered up by a screen of coal-ashes which have not tenacity to retain themselves or aught else. The ultimate safety of the Monument appears to require that some remedy for this state of things should be applied immediately.

Probably no more propitious time could be found than the present, when the foundations will be uncovered, with all their imperfections and deficiencies.

Very Respectfully,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,  
Chairman.”

No reflection upon any one was intended, and none was made. The coat fitted however and was voluntarily assumed. The propriety of the appeal was amply vindicated by the prompt action of the *Honorable Council*, through which an effectual and permanent remedy has been applied.

Errors in the inscription upon the Tablets of the Monument were discovered long since ; and an order was passed by the *City Council* to have them remedied. This has not yet been done. If the corrections are to be made, it is very desirable that they should be completed before the pavement around the Monument is laid down, in the Spring.

A serious imperfection in the coil of rope held by the Sailer, upon the S. W. angle, is rendering itself disagreeably conspicuous by its effect upon the hewn-stone beneath. The following

note from a gentleman entirely competent to give an opinion in the premises, is herewith presented for your more thorough comprehension.

“ WORCESTER, *January 3d*, 1876.

*Edward W. Lincoln, Esq.,*

Sir:

You ask for the cause and remedy of the stain on the Soldiers' Monument, near the figure of the Sailor. It is evidently being constantly produced by the decomposition and corroding of substances composing the core around which the coil of the heaving-line in the Sailor's hand was cast. This result was perhaps expected by those who furnished the figure, for it will be seen that they drilled a small hole through the bronze metal at the lowest point of the coil.

It might have been avoided by removing the core when cast; and can be stopped by sawing a small section out of one side of the coil and removing the decomposing matter. And the piece can be brazed, or soldered and chased in again firmly; and, if taken from the right place the joints cannot be seen from the ground. Unless this is done, the rust will probably continue as long as the core lasts.

Yours &c.,

B. H. KINNEY.”

A single other reference to the Monument and the subject will be dismissed. Viewed fundamentally, the pile itself is an achievement, if not a success. Yet the critical eye beholds its apex with scarcely the satisfaction imagined by Webster when, in a fine frenzy, he contemplated the sun lingering and playing upon that summit on Bunker Hill. Regarded *a posteriori*, as it is most seen, the position of the bronze Goddess appears most unfortunate; the whole figure being dwarfed and the head seeming hunched into the shoulders. Her reversion, or rather torsion, which is perfectly feasible; forcing her to confront the North Star, and leaving the sparrows on the mound at the South to study that most singular aspect which now bewilders Washington Square; would undoubtedly commend itself to public approval.

A general illumination of the City was recently indulged in. It is suggested whether the Treasury is too poor to defray the cost of repairing the old or procuring a new Flag-Staff. Other eminent men may succeed the late Vice-President, in mortuary procession. Besides, in the exuberance of our patriotism, on this

Centennial Year of the Republic, should we not feel some slight degree of mortification, if unable to hoist the Federal Banner upon the Twenty-Second of February, or the Fourth of July.

In its Report for the year 1874, this COMMISSION suggested, in the following language, that :

“Salem Square should not longer be tolerated as a public eyesore. A decent regard should be had for simple appearance and some consideration manifested for the very respectable Religious Societies which have there planted their Houses of Worship. Has not the time come to stop the Wood and Hay,—matters of indispensable necessity but yet susceptible of regulation,—upon the outskirts of the City ; at Lincoln and Webster Squares for instance where facilities for measuring and weighing already exist. *Then*, a sufficient street being left open, the remainder of the Square could be restored to the COMMON, from which it was needlessly wrested ; and the Eastern boundary completed as well as defined by a continuation of the new Ornamental Kerb. A speedy decision of this matter, which cannot be postponed much longer at any rate, would materially facilitate the labor imposed upon this COMMISSION of putting in good order the ground adjacent to the Soldiers’ Monument.”

The opinion thus expressed has been confirmed by longer reflection. Section 1, chap. 45, of the City Ordinances, provides that the “Mayor and Aldermen shall appoint a suitable place or places in the Streets and Squares of the City of Worcester as a stand or stands for the measurement, weight, and sale of Hay, Straw, Wood, Bark, and Charcoal ;” &c., &c. Waiving the question why such provision should thus be made more than for cloth, or cattle ; the inquiry arises whether Salem Square is now, if it ever was, a “suitable place” ? It was certainly abstracted from the COMMON. Why not restore it and continue the Ornamental Kerb, along its Eastern boundary, from Park Street to the corner of Front ?

The Urinals, erected upon the COMMON by this COMMISSION, have not been decently used by a portion of the people whose relief they were designed, and, being converted into a nuisance, will doubtless have to be removed. Yet it seems a pity ; not merely because their cost was considerable, but on account of the notorious fact that they inadequately meet a

necessity, of which no false delicacy should preclude the consideration ; and for which public policy and decency absolutely demand a remedy. It might almost be said, without exaggeration, that the need of a Public Hospital was not more imperative.

Once again :—durable Foot-Paths should be constructed, if slowly yet surely. Two-thirds of our population cross upon them at all hours of the day and night. Why intercept them in their hurried course, with a seemingly-endless pathway of mud ? Compelling them either to violate the rules of this COMMISSION by trampling over the lawns ; or the Commandments, by the use of all kinds of naughty language ?

Then, when the Eastern side of the COMMON has been completed, by the inclosure of a portion of Salem Square within the extended Kerb ; when the Brazen Image confronts Ursa Major ; when the *Jet d'Eau*, heretofore advised, has been constructed in the suitable position already assigned ; we may feel that the best has been accomplished that was possible upon so limited an area.

The acknowledgments of the COMMISSION are due to the accomplished City Engineer, C. H. M. Blake ; as to his Assistant, Gen. Percy Daniels, for much cordial co-operation, and for many valuable and wise suggestions.

The Shade Trees of the City are in their ordinary good condition. Some veterans were necessarily felled upon Main Street ; whence it is anticipated that the removal of all will, sooner or later, be demanded by the real or supposed exigencies of Trade. Yet, in the judgment of this COMMISSION, that will be found a mistaken advantage which, for the sake of glaring light admits torrid heat. It may not be the case in Worcester ; but, almost universally, the shady side of a street is sought for purposes of fashionable traffic. By this is meant the side that is the most sheltered in the afternoons of Summer ; when protection from the fervid rays of the sun is not to be despised, even by those engaged in the merchandise of Ice. The fashionable, by which is intended the Dry Goods, traffic, always has given direction to the business of a City ; and it will doubtless continue to do so. The noble Elms that are still suffered to adorn our principal

thoroughfare ; our sole thoroughfare until PARK AVENUE was substantially opened ; may be ruthlessly sacrificed. But the prediction is ventured, that Owners and Tenants alike will rue the facility with which they solicited, or consented, to such wantonness. This COMMISSION would agree to plant, or replant, the whole length of Main Street with thrifty Elms, engaging that they should live, but for the fatuity, (to call it nothing worse), which has suffered coal-cellars and other similar encroachments to be made by abutters upon the Public Easement. For as the community would have a right to fill the location with Elevated Tramways, in the Heavens above, within the limits of its location, be that four or six rods wide ; so, by parity of logic and law, it cannot be excluded from occupying the earth beneath with Gas or Water-pipes, and Sewers. Individuals, however, have always the advantage of the body-politic in a knowledge of what they want and in the determination to possess it at all risks. Another obstacle to the planting of this thoroughfare is, that no more upon Main Street than elsewhere, would owners of estates, or others, pay the slightest heed to that Municipal Ordinance which prohibits "the fastening of Animals to any Ornamental or Shade Tree, or to any fence or other thing erected for the protection of such Tree."

It is true that complaint against offenders might be made by this COMMISSION, if it knew them. But then the COMMISSION scrupulously refrains from encroaching upon the functions of other Departments, of whom it might perchance be required by Ordinance "to prosecute all offenders with promptness and effect and use all lawful and proper means to secure convictions ;" also "to enforce and carry into effect all laws and city ordinances, and to be vigilant to detect and punish any breach thereof."

It has been the aim of the COMMISSION, during the past year, to set out none but good, merchantable trees. The discouragement at seeing their trunks gnawed by horses, within a day or two of planting, may be imagined if not shared.

All vegetable growth must be fostered by stimulating the latent forces of the earth. Manure is ~~not~~ requisite to the Shade

as to the Fruit tree. As long ago as A. D., 1870, this COMMISSION, in its Report, remarked that :

“The entire bulk of Manure from the city stables is now delivered upon the Poor-Farm, being hauled some two (2) miles or more beyond the Common which is starving for lack of it. If the collection of offal were so systematized, as to be rendered available for the support of a Piggery upon that Farm, as it should be, an existing evil would be converted into a source of profit. Sufficient Pork would be gained for the supply of that meagre table, so strenuously insisted upon by the City Fathers, at their annual Dinner: and a portion of the manure from the city-stables might be spared, to stay the complete impoverishment of the Public Grounds.”

Time has made the evil more apparent by intensifying it. From that date to this, not a pound of civic manure has been applied to the PUBLIC GROUNDS,—simply because it was unattainable. Yet this COMMISSION has been compelled to hunt up that supply, from private stables, which should have been theirs by sheer right because the municipality was in possession of it. It is not believed that the city gains anything, in the long run, by smart attempts of one Department to make profit out of another. During the past season, a stock of coarse grass was cut upon the COMMON, and ELM PARK, that had no especial market value. It was presented to the Water Commissioner, at his request, relieving that officer from the necessity of purchasing its equivalent in bulk for purposes of packing. A paper debit and credit might have cut a figure, perhaps, but at what actual gain to the City?

The Charter provides that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

“ Shall lay out said Public Grounds, or such part thereof as they shall from time to time judge proper; and it shall be the duty of said Commissioners, from time to time, as appropriations shall be made therefor by the City Council, to cause all necessary paths and avenues to be constructed therein, and to cause said Public Grounds to be planted and embellished with trees, as they shall think proper”; &c., &c.

The task of reclaiming ELM PARK, too long deferred in years past, by those who consider it their whole duty to let a large and valuable property lie waste, because its improvement will not work itself out; or, in other words, that the City gains by burying its talent in a napkin; was commenced, in earnest, in February,



A. D., 1873, when, under a vote of the HONORABLE COUNCIL, the sum of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) was authorized to be expended in affording labor to the unemployed and destitute. During that period of substantial relief to the poor, and of material aid to this COMMISSION, one of the sheets of Ornamental Water, or Pools, contemplated by this COMMISSION, was excavated. A vast amount of material was supplied, in this way, for filling low places; the very excavation more than answering the expectations of the most sanguine as a means of drainage. It has presented attractions as a sheet of water, to the multitudes who have commenced to throng the PARK, on Holidays and pleasant evenings; while to their children, of which the West Side is not entirely destitute if fecund to the verge of timidity, the navigation of miniature ships in Summer; and the exhilaration of skating, conveniently and safely, as now; are ample compensation.

Its complete success, as an ornament or a means of youthful enjoyment, has prompted the COMMISSION to the early completion of their original design. They work slowly, because the nature of the soil exacts it, and for the additional reason that they respect and share in the popular demand for economy. But the excavation of this second Pool, of different form and dimensions, should ensure that thorough drainage of the Southern section of the PARK, which could be achieved so well in no other way, if at all. The dirt derived therefrom will go far to perfect that gradual slope from the AVENUE which the eye requires for its satisfaction. There are, of course, minor details of plan and accomplishment: as, however they are fully complete within the conception of the COMMISSION, while their elaboration has not even been attempted, a specification of particulars would be worse than idle.

The amount of dirt to be derived from this second excavation was just the subject of reference. A part of it will be needed to replace the gravel that was dug out to put on the walks of the COMMON. The greater portion will supply the deficiency occasioned by the unwillingness or neglect of the Highway Department to deliver the street scrapings upon the terms that we invariably till within the past year. This COMMISSION has been wont to allow a credit of Twenty-Five Cents per load for the



curious conglomeration of animal droppings, back-hair, and hoop-skirts. If it sow the seeds of all ill-favored weeds, it yet served as filling. At a fair estimate, the teams would average ten (10) loads per diem. Assuming then the gross charge to the City, of each team, to be Five Dollars per diem; and they could be and were hired of private contractors, at that rate, throughout the year; it will be seen that the allowance by this COMMISSION covered one-half the whole cost of the team. Bear ever in mind that the City has, and must have, those teams. That, if the streets are cleaned, the scrapings must be carted away. Why, not then transport them to the PUBLIC GROUNDS of the City, where they would answer some purpose; instead of hauling them a mile to be dumped in the Municipal Barn Yard,—awaiting a purchaser; meanwhile festering, and adding another to the savory smells of that section. Why, in fact, any such absolute tomfoolery! Of what net profit to transfer from one pocket to the other? Nay,—unless a fallacy underlies all mechanical principles, would there not be a real, if not evident, loss from friction? And still this COMMISSION is able to dispute its own argument. For, learning that if it would not buy for an unreasonable price, what it ought to get for nothing? it proved itself, as usual, equal to the emergency. It could excavate and maintain a debit and credit account with itself; the beauty of the transaction being, and most likely the sole instance on record, that neither party to it could possibly lose.

But! and the conundrum offers itself to the Board of Trade;—wherefore should not the City of Worcester deliver to itself that which belongs to itself, of which it assumes to be the common carrier, and which should be left (where this COMMISSION will show, as for five years past), in the place to which it must do most good!

As stated in the last Annual Report, Twenty-Five Hundred (2500) lineal yards of Foot paths, or Walks, have been constructed: or One and Forty-Two Hundredths ( $1\frac{42}{100}$ ) Miles. Where not prevented by insuperable obstacles, those Paths were staked out and worked to a width of Twelve (12) Feet. One, not essential to the plan of the COMMISSION, will be obliterated in fact, as already in purpose: and another, that was contemplated from

the outset, will afford a pleasant substitute and just about maintain the measurement. A very large proportion of those Paths that were constructed have been covered with a superior gravel, dug from the upland on the Eastern side of the PARK, where it was doubtless left by the driven waters, with whose deposits the whole Western Valley of the City is everywhere underlain. And a most happy circumstance it has proved. For there can scarcely a limit be put to the cost that would have fallen upon the COMMISSION, had it been obliged to purchase, by the load, that which the labor of two men, otherwise unemployed, sufficed to procure during a few brief weeks of Winter. A plenty remains, where the first was found, to fulfil every reasonable and present wish of the COMMISSION. Properly husbanded, and timely replaced with any substitute whose quality shall suffice; there need be no apprehension of the trouble that is chronic upon the COMMON. The soil will be free enough: *let it be recorded!*

The COMMISSION has been wont to derive an Annual Revenue from the letting of portions of ELM PARK for the uses of the Circus or Menagerie. That source of revenue is lost to it forever. The last Circus was tolerated upon the ground in the early Spring; but the rapid progress of improvement precluded all thought of granting similar permission to another. Upon the absolute refusal of a second application, the Chairman was finally induced to suffer the exhibition to be held upon his own land, with the express condition that the fee for license should be paid to the City Treasury, for the benefit of this COMMISSION. Which so happened. Now the PUBLIC GROUNDS need more money than they are likely to get. The Public Library, which is one form of instruction, receives a generous appropriation and gets, in addition, the Dog-Fund. Yet dogs do more harm upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS, to the sward as well as to the shrubs and trees, in questionable and unmentionable ways, than will ever be repaired by the votaries of mere literature. Is it asking too much then, when this COMMISSION requests that the Fees for Marriage Licenses and for Births be appropriated to its uses? The injury done to the lawns is chiefly attributable to erosion which, curious enough, is caused by the devotees of Eros; whose complement

is although in no sense his denominative. One-half of the courting, in the City, is commenced or consummated upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS. The premises conceded, is not the conclusion inevitable! Why should not the profit enure to this COMMISSION of that relation which it has done so much to invite and render charming?

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS may have transcended its province, in former years: but, if so, the offence was condoned by the People. Partaking in the general prosperity, as sensible of the common depression, its members have, and can have, neither intent nor motive but to promote the better welfare of the community. They have been taunted with being "schemers" by some whose loftiest ambition and sole profession in life, is, to bear false witness for political effect. They may dream dreams and see visions: but, sleeping or waking, their only purpose and exclusive aim has been, as it will continue to be, the further advancement of the Municipality. They may not be old enough to compare notes with that senile profundity which discourses learnedly upon topics, whereof as no knowledge exists no contradiction need be feared; which can trace Præ-Historia down through Chaos to the Primeval Man; whose dull omniscience grows even more obscure at the merest allusion to a mythical and submerged Atlantis. In such matters, they agree with the Poet, happy in their ignorance. But they prefer, in this Nineteenth Century, in full accord with the world that breathes and moves around them, to combine Beauty with Utility, alike as private citizens or unsalaried officials. If allowed the choice, they would much rather reside in Athens than Sparta. Their open and unqualified preference is for development:—believing that the world has been continually advancing—never retrograding—from the Age of Iron to that of Gold. Pertinent to which are the subjoined remarks of one who knew whereof he wrote, writing therefore to the point:—

"Cities arise from the necessities of commerce or manufactures, or from being selected as the seats of political power: but their expansion is not limited by these causes. Their population is swollen by persons who are not engaged in buying or selling, or in labor of any kind, or in affairs, but who are influenced in their residence by considerations of a wholly different kind. Chief among them ought to be good laws, good order, the safety of person

and property; and healthiness of location as affected by climate, water supply, and drainage: but it is not certain that men are not quite as much attracted by the pleasures as by the solid advantages of Cities. Paris is believed to owe half its population to its natural and artificial means of enjoyment; although it is in addition one of the best governed cities in the world in all details of municipal administration. In libraries and collections of works of Art American Cities can hardly expect to vie, at present, with those of Europe: but in public parks, gardens and drives they may maintain an easy superiority; and this is an advantage which they are generally turning to account."

Which is all as true as it is admirably stated.

Possessed of similar views, and looking forward to the future growth of Worcester, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS has, for years past, recommended the construction of a broad AVENUE, which should environ the City, supplying facilities for intercommunication between the extremities, and opening up the contiguous country for settlement or much needed reclamation from briar or swamp; inducing the street loafer to become an independent yeoman, and attracting, by the simple aspect of rural loveliness, the permanent sojourn of the chance wayfarer.

"So broad as to admit of adequate and grateful shade to ample footpaths; so thoroughly built as to be proof alike against autumnal frost or vernal flood; a convenience for the loaded team and an attraction for the pleasure carriage: wooing occupation of hundreds of charming dells and nooks by its ruthless exposure of rustic beauty, thereby benefiting individuals and augmenting the general valuation; a measure which commends itself in proportion as it is considered: one which this Commission will advocate in season and out of season, living or dying, in the hope and faith of its ultimate consummation.

The plan and completion of such Avenue, plainly outlined to this Commission as it has long been, would of course be a work of time. It would aim to take advantage of existing roads, whenever practicable; widening them to an inflexible uniform limit; straightening their course here and introducing sweeping curves there; following the general trend of the foot-hills whose lines of circumvallation describe an irregular quadrilateral, whereof the Military Academy and the City Farm, the Quinsigamo Iron Works and the Davis Cottage should constitute the salient and re-entering angles, Coe's Reservoir and the Lake the *point d'appui et resistance*.

Much of this comprehensive project has been accomplish

thanks to a happy audacity\* that has been unjustly held up to public odium as almost criminal. More remains to be achieved. But the ultimate completion of the whole is as certain as that this energetic and still wealthy community will not always rest supine. Because we have met with loss, shall we also lose hope? Because trade is dull, shall it never recover, after it has sloughed off those whose sole capital was a false pretence! No! the measures,—“schemes” if you prefer, that met with unanimous approval when first suggested, are the same now as then. Men may have altered, although in some cases it required nut-galls to detect the change. Affairs, whether public or private, may not wear so roseate hues. Nevertheless no idea, that is based upon truth and has no other motive than honesty, shall ever die. It is true that what was politic yesterday may not be expedient to-day. Although of the wisdom of finishing the AVENUE as far as Webster Square, (so little remaining to be done), now that it could be accomplished so cheaply, the COMMISSION has the most undoubting conviction.

One thing must not be overlooked. The COMMISSION, in whatever recommendations it made originally, had not the “Betterment Law” in mind. For such forgetfulness it must crave pardon; although had it even been fresh in recollection, these Reports would never have advised the application of a method of extortion so grossly unjust. Almost the worst legacy of those evil times, when everything was rank with a seeming prosperity; when credit was illimitable, and there should be pay-day no more forever! When a man *would take* water if he could get it; *must have* a side-walk; and, as he went home at night, tumbled into an open trench excavated through the ledge, that day, to furnish sewerage for his dwelling. Oh! were not those flush times! No sceptics, denouncing this wild “scheme” or repudiating that unsound measure,—but all voting together; (saving possibly a wretched minority;) all in the same boat, floating with the current;—all economists and—spendthrifts! everything lovely and the goose getting plucked!

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\* Audacem et tenacem propositi virum.

“Down the river did glide, with wind and with tide,  
 A pig with vast celerity;  
 And the Devil looked wise as he saw how the while  
 It cut it's own throat. ‘There!’ quoth he with a smile,  
 ‘Goes England's (?) commercial prosperity.’”

And so of every other plan of public improvement, suggested by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, for the combined purposes of promoting the growth and enhancing the appearance of Worcester: each and all of the arguments in their behalf, yesterday, hold valid to day and are certain of ultimate realization. Sooner or later, the oarsman upon the LAKE shall row, if he choose, through the series of inverted arches that will pierce the obstructing causeway of the present day; restoring the enjoyment of that beautiful sheet of water, whose lustre, like that of a precious gem, may be defaced but not wholly marred. So may we obtain that WATER-PARK on the East,—assigned to us by nature; but which Man, in his haste and waste, has striven his uttermost to despoil.

“*Après moi le déluge!*” exclaimed the wily Metternich, as the waves of Revolution arose around castle and throne. “The deluge will come, but not in my day.” Nevertheless the Revolution did not await his convenience, but came in its own good time; and the aged statesman, “standing not upon the order of his going, but going at once,” found himself a refugee upon English soil. “The wind bloweth where it listeth:” and some of us who are in the way of experiencing its full force have a keen perception of at least one Scriptural truth. There is a hose carriage at the head of John Street, and a *cul de sac* at its foot. Another hose carriage guards Pleasant Street, with hose enough to reach, perhaps, six hundred (600) feet. But “the wind bloweth where it listeth” and will not hush its hoarse roar at the call of any foreman. The reasons why a Reservoir should occupy (ornamenting) the top of NEWTON HILL are suggested, whenever chimneys are blown clear from a roof, or a flagstaff snaps in twain. Almost before your hose-carriage could pass its threshold, the Fire would be beyond control. For it was not within the thought of this COMMISSION to urge the enlistment of Gravity to fight or of your polite, gentlemanly flames, which blaze up in a calm

moonlight night, careful not to burn too fiercely for the capacity of a Babcock. But rather of that other kind, controllable only at the start, furious and devastating, "rolling up like a scroll" everything in their path and with which nothing but water, *already delivered on the spot by gravity*, can by any possibility cope. It is the capital destroyed—absolutely, irrevocably blotted from existence—at Portland, Chicago, and Boston, that has caused the paralysis of business, more than any or all other causes. A dead loss ; for, at such crises, Insurance fails, and did it not, would simply transfer from the pocket of one man to that of another. That lesson, at least, should be neither new nor strange to the people of Worcester, who can recollect that the People's and Bay State Companies once lived and that the Merchants & Farmers has only not died. But,—“after me the deluge !” We have an “efficient Fire Department,” and — no such destructive conflagration has yet occurred ! *Music !*

Economy, whether among individuals or nations, is an exceeding virtue. But to conclude, as other preachers commence, with a text,—What says EDMUND BURKE ?

“*Parsimony is not economy.* Expense, and great expense, may be an essential part in true economy, which is a distributive virtue, and consists not in saving, but in selection. Parsimony requires no providence, no sagacity, no power of combination, no comparison, no judgment. Mere instinct, and that not an instinct of the noblest kind, may produce this false economy in perfection. The other economy has larger views. It demands a discriminating judgment, and a fair, sagacious mind.”

All which is respectfully submitted : for and in behalf of the Commission,

*by*

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

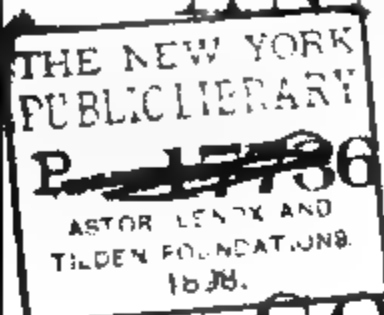
*Worcester, Mass., January 27th,*  
*A. D., 1876.*





*McCaskey*  
*William S. Bart.*

# ANNUAL REPORT



OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1876.

WORCESTER:

PRESS OF CHAS. HAMILTON,

CENTRAL EXCHANGE.

1877.



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

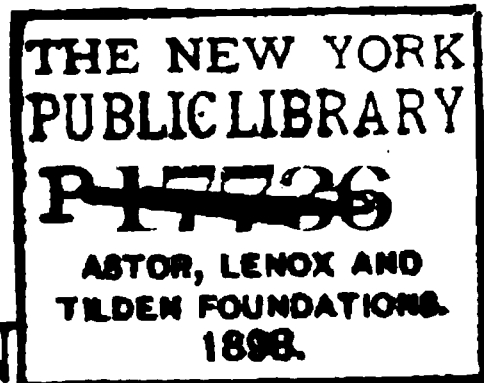
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# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To The Honorable CITY COUNCIL.*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, in accordance with the requirements of the Twenty-First Section of the Charter of the City, have the honor to submit the following "Report of their Acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same," during the past financial year.

CITY OF WORCESTER

*In account with*

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

*Dr.*

To Appropriation for current year,	\$3,000 00
“ Sale of 1,075 lbs. iron @ 60 cts.,	6 45
“ Sale of grass on Elm Park,	40 00
	<hr/>
	\$3,046 45

*Per Contra,                      Cr.*

*December, 1875:*

Acct. of N. W. Holden,	\$    5 55
“ Percy Daniels, engineering $\frac{1}{2}$ day,	2 40
“ G. H. Palmer,                      “ $2\frac{1}{2}$ days,	5 77
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	47 25
“ Michael McGrath, labor and teams,	58 12
“ David Rowe, labor,	43 75
“ James Draper, trees (old acct.),	22 50

*January, 1876:*

Acct. of Hugh Waters, labor,	4 50
“ Chas. Hamilton, Annual Report,	30 41
“ J. D. Baldwin & Co., advertising,	1 50
“ C. H. Doe & Co., “	1 50
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	41 62
“ M. McGrath, teams and labor,	261 37
“ Kinnicutt & Co., tools,	2 35
“ Downey Bros., teams,	2 50
“ John Dempsey, labor,	2 62

*February:*

Acct. of M. McGrath, teams and labor,	214 67
“ Benj. C. Jaques, labor,	10 40
“ E. B. Crane & Co., lumber,	9 65
“ Hugh Waters, labor,	2 25
“ Steven Rowe, “	42 00

*March:*

Acct. of John S. Ballard & Co., pail,	60
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	45 90
“ Kinnicutt & Co., shovel,	75
“ George L. Allen, implements,	4 50
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	42 87
“ M. McGrath, labor and teams,	110 00

*April:*

Acct. of M. McGrath, earth, teams, and labor,	16 75
“ David Rowe, labor,	56 00
“ Steven Rowe, “	38 50
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	21 25
“ Kinnicutt & Co., rake,	90
“ J. & J. A. Rice,	50
“ James Draper, shrubs and trees,	21 50

*May:*

Acct. of Kinnicutt & Co., repairs lawn mower,	1 00
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	47 25
“ David Rowe, “	44 62
“ D. M. Woodward, stone,	8 70
“ F. C. Thayer, 100 W. Ash,	10 00
“ James Draper, trees &c,	14
“ J. & J. A. Rice,	5
“ J. B. O'Leary, work,	3
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	40
“ M. McGrath, labor,	28
“ O. B. Hadwen, lumber, trees, and planting latter,	332
“ Highway Department, street scrapings,	23

PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

*June:*

Acct. of Kinnicutt & Co., tools,	1 75
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	40 25
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	27 87
“ David Rowe, labor,	45 50

*July:*

Acct. of N. W. Holden, screenings,	8 20
“ David Rowe, labor,	42 87
“ Steven Rowe, “	44 62
“ Benj. C. Jaques,	2 00
“ James Draper, hemlocks,	7 20
“ Water Works Department, labor on urinals,	3 40
“ Downey Bros., labor and teams,	4 50
“ Kinnicutt & Co., screws,	50
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	28 56
“ James Draper, trees set by streets,	40 00

*August:*

Acct. of Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	25 51
“ Samuel F. Shattuck, “	16 00
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	42 00
“ David Rowe, “	47 25
“ Jonas Hartshorn, street trees and planting,	10 00
“ George T. Sutton, repairing town pump,	5 70
“ M. McGrath, labor,	134 50

*September:*

Acct. of Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	9 50
“ Sewer Department, 1,000 bricks, delivered,	9 50
“ David Rowe, labor,	43 75
“ Steven Rowe, “	45 50
“ Kinnicutt & Co., rake,	40
“ M. McGrath, teams and labor,	59 75

*October:*

Acct. of M. McGrath, labor and teams,	17 25
“ O. B. Hadwen, shrubs and trees,	32 50
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	45 50
“ David Rowe, “	45 50
“ J. B. Brooks, manure,	56 06
“ Downey Bros., “	19 50
“ C. F. Henry, “	70 00
“ S. F. Shattuck, pruning trees,	10 65
“ Charles H. Perry, “	34 72
“ W. W. Patch, street trees and planting,	7 00
“ Kinnicutt & Co., gravel screen,	9 25
“ J. & J. A. Rice, shove's, &c.,	4 00
“ W. W. Cook, plants,	8 00
“ James Draper, shrubs,	12 15

Acct. of M. McGrath, loam,	23 75
“ H. M. Hubbard, manure,	4 75
“ John Harrigan, “	19 50

*November :*

Acct. of Benj. C. Jaques, lumber, &c.,	34 00
“ M. McGrath, teaming,	3 00
“ Steven Rowe, labor,	42 00
“ David Rowe, “	31 50
“ Charles H. Perry, pruning trees,	5 68
“ James Draper, shrubs,	3 00
“ Sumner Pratt & Co., cord,	44

Total Appropriation and Revenue,	\$3,046 45
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“ Expenditures,	\$3,045 65
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Reserve for “ <i>Sinking Fund</i> ,”	80
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In the Report of this *Commission* for 1876, the Shade-Trees along the Streets and throughout the PUBLIC GROUNDS of the city, were represented to be in their “ordinary good condition.” Scarce a fortnight had elapsed from the completion of that Report, however, when there was afforded cause for doubt if there would longer be Shade-Trees at all. Upon the eve of St. Valentine’s Day, of all days in the year, a heavy storm of sleet, that froze as it fell, commenced ; continuing with unabated fury through the ensuing day and night and into the 15th. Stout trunks were snapped in twain or broken short off: and massive limbs, shorn and twisted as though the merest twigs, cumbered the ground in every direction. Such was the devastation that travel was seriously impeded upon many highways, until a passage could be hewn through the obstructions. The sun not appearing, its heat was lacking to remove the superincumbent load. Ordinarily, in such cases, the latent or incipient warmth of vegetation melts the icy coating, which speedily disintegrates and falls off. But Nature was in no such relenting mood here. And indeed, long after the waste and wreck were cleared away, the shining pinnacles and fretted tracery of copse and forest continued to illustrate that quiet but resistless force which had occasioned the wild havoc.

Throughout the whole commotion, the Highway Commissioner displayed exceeding activity, gathering up of the fragmen-



many baskets-full and making unto himself a friend of the mammon of righteousness (?) by offering all that was worthless to the poor. Replying to an inquiry, from the Chairman of this *Commission*, "if he was about to open a wood yard?" he said that he was supplementing the deficiencies of Wanshacum and securing the ice! But it was noticeable, in days when Prohibition had yielded to License, that he was only heedful of the perfect crystals; and of them, but such as had a stick in each. They must have come handy at the festival which celebrated the completion of that new City Barn.

Such measures as were practicable were taken at once. Before the storm was at an end, the Chairman of the *Commission* had arranged, with the only man who is sufficiently reckless of his neck, to have all branches that threatened danger to life or limb removed as quickly as possible. Of course the more important streets were first to be cared for; as in proportion to the amount and frequency of travel would be the chances of injury. Mr. Perry has done all that one man could, under the circumstances; more than any one else would attempt: and what the *Commission* has hesitated to accept from him because of its manifest, great peril. Yet, after all, little could be accomplished compared with what was required. And if reproach is to attach to this *Commission*, because all the Shade-Trees upon the Highways and PUBLIC GROUNDS have not been suitably cared for, its justification must be found in the fact, as of old, that though the harvest was great, the laborers were few. The very worst use that can be made of a blockhead is to put a saw in his hand and set him pruning. Better that trunk and limb alike should endure, for awhile, the rough surgery of Nature; than that they should be surrendered, a helpless sacrifice, to ignorant or whimsical mutilation. Time may bring healing on its wings. But the waste created by the unskillful use of axe and saw, in the hands of the average, modern *professor*, can never be repaired. It will therefore never be permitted, much less invited, by this *Commission*. Should no similar disaster befall, during the remaining winter, it is likely that all the Trees which need it may get proper attention before the frosts of another autumn.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to state that a severe snow-storm,

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H. M. Hubbard, 1  
John Harrigan,

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f Benj. C. Jaques,  
M. McGrath, tear  
Steven Rowe, lab  
David Rowe, "  
Charles H. Perry.  
James Draper, sh  
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on the 4th day of April, doubtless well remembered by the pilgrims to the City Reservoir, largely augmented the damage to the Shade-Trees by reason of the excessive weight thereby imposed upon them.

It is to be regretted that Decrees of the CITY COUNCIL, establishing new streets and sidewalks, or altering the grades which have previously existed, should often compel the felling or extirpation of well-rooted and thrifty trees. It is still more to be regretted when, as is frequently the case, such opening of the new, or change of the old, being but a concession to the prayer of abutters, does not exempt this *Commission* from unjust censure. There are but few persons in the city,—it is a public misfortune that there should be any,—who do not appreciate the trees which shade them from the summer's sun; and finally come to regard them with somewhat of the same feeling of attachment that they bestow upon their dependent animals. All such might realize,—would they but reflect,—that the loss of a Street-Tree is never even contemplated with satisfaction by this *Commission*: that its doom, when inevitable, is deferred as long as possible, of which King Street furnishes a notable illustration; and that it is replaced just as soon as the completion of their work, by the Municipal Departments, allows planting to be undertaken with a reasonable assurance of good results. But when a street or sidewalk is to be lowered to a depth of several feet, all experience shows that it is better to sacrifice a sturdy Shade-Tree than to attempt a prolongation of its life, after the indispensable mutilation of root and branch. The process of recovery is slower than that of unchecked growth. And the cost, both of purchase and planting, of a young tree, well-established and thrifty, is incomparably less than that of lowering a widely-rooted and stubborn veteran. It is true, the resident and way-farer must dispense, for awhile, with grateful and wonted shade: but a City endures through all time, and its entire policy and improvements should contemplate perennial vigor.

The labors of other than the *official* highwayman, however, are fatal to the Shade-Trees upon our streets. Some arbor culturists have so much confidence in the judgment of this *Commission* as to appropriate to their private use such better spec-

mens as have been newly planted. The "thief in the night" steals his pick and shovel from a member of this *Commission*, (that he may not get rich upon his salary!); digs up ten or a dozen trees at once, say in Park Avenue, that had but just been put in the ground; and, throwing them over a convenient wall, goes in search of a truckman. Thrust hurriedly into a cramped hole, to anticipate detection; let them die, if they must,—what cares he? All he has to do is to follow this *Commission*, reaping where he has not sown and continuing to steal where he has not yet become known. It is only an act of justice to admit that a somewhat notorious session of the Police Court was synchronous with the sudden stoppage of those depredations.

Yet other harm is occasionally suffered where it would appear impossible for the very wantonness of mischief or malice to gratify itself. Upon one of those pious strolls, in which the Chairman of this COMMISSION occasionally indulges, to inspect a temple not made with hands and to educe lessons for human edification; upon the first Sunday of October, for instance; he observed the wholesale mutilation, within the space of a few rods, on PARK AVENUE, of five (5) Weymouth or White Pines, and two (2) White-Ash trees. The writer has known, in a Western city, the joyful Christmas-tide to be welcomed with decorations of Fir-Tree and Box plundered from the graves of children. But here could be no pretense of merry-making. The mischief was done for its own sake. Christmas was two (2) months in advance of the maleficence which, as if to publish its recklessness, left the tops where they had fallen. This COMMISSION has not been vociferous in denouncing, or even making known, every little act of outlawry, upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS, which has arrested the attention of others than its members. The development of the local "hoodlum" early attracted notice. The best interests of the City have appeared to require the almost omnipresence of some force which might exercise swift and stern repression. Failing to obtain the co operation or presence of the police, upon *Elm Park*, it is satisfactory to learn of an effective response to insolence delivered, when occasion served, *straight from the shoulder!* The maintenance of order, and a due observance of all proper regulations established by this

COMMISSION for the protection of the public property, should not, however, be left to depend upon individual muscle. There can be no valid or sufficient reason why the *Common* should not be patrolled by the municipal police. A mounted officer, as heretofore suggested, would be of essential service upon the Western side of the City and his oversight might easily comprehend *Elm Park* within its purview. So much may at least be depended upon: that this COMMISSION will exact and enforce that decent behavior from all who frequent the PUBLIC GROUNDS, which is not only seemly in itself but is rightfully expected by the community.

An unusual amount of planting has been accomplished during the year. As it was the Centennial of the Republic, it seemed good to the COMMISSION to commemorate the fact by appropriate landmarks. And the future wayfarer, as he pauses to rest his tired animals under the spreading canopy of elm or maple, may reflect upon a century of Popular Rule and indulge a kindly thought of those who adopted a sensible method of perpetuating its lessons. For a Republic has taught in vain, whose servants have not been instructed to foster, in all possible ways, the comfort and welfare of its citizens. Unquestionably, the world is governed too much. Yet the truth is as old as time, and as enduring; that every real advance of our race has been owing to the far-reaching vision and happy audacity of those who, if they builded wiser than they knew, nevertheless built.

The practice of continuous planting along a street, heretofore adopted from a conviction that it was the only method of attaining any positive result, has been maintained. In many instances, individuals have applied to the COMMISSION for trees, engaging to set them in front of their estates, by the line of the highway. The growing and thrifty nursery at the S. W. corner of *Elm Park*, has furnished well nigh a hundred to two persons, by whose public spirited and unselfish efforts Chandler and West Boylston streets will greatly benefit. PARK AVENUE, and Plantation street are conspicuous examples of well-directed labor. It would be but a waste of space to recite each instance where lots of from two (2) to ten (10) trees have been supplied, to fill a gap on the shorter streets or to make a commencement th.

should induce imitation. The specimens have generally been of superior quality; unusual care being directed to their inspection, prior to purchase or delivery. It were greatly to be desired that individuals could be persuaded that the value of a tree, for planting, does not increase in the ratio of its size. This COMMISSION would infinitely prefer such as measure but one and a-half inches in diameter at six (6) inches from the collar; being thoroughly satisfied that in a few years their development will far surpass that of others which, preferred for immediate display, oftener than not disappoint their cultivator; dying before they can get well rooted.

It is pleasant to acknowledge the receipt of some gifts, (not "donations,") during the past year. A large number of fine specimens of the Weymouth or White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*) were presented by Mr. O. B. Hadwen, in the spring, who generously replaced so many of them as failed to survive the extreme drought of summer. A variety of large-sized flowering shrubs have also been received from him and planted in suitable spots. Mr. Stephen Salisbury, Jr., supplied a lot of herbaceous plants, from which a good return is expected with the advent of another season. The contribution of the writer counted, perhaps, but does not require specific mention. But the COMMISSION would make especial reference to a gift from Prof. C. S. Sargent of the Bussey Institute, connected with the University, at Cambridge, whereof the intrinsic value was less than its worth as an evidence of cordial sympathy. If the Menzies' Spruce (*Abies Menziesii*) endures the present winter, unharmed in the very exposed position that it was made to occupy, in *Elm Park*, the question of its entire hardiness may be dismissed. That piece of ground, in fact, whether from severity of exposure or diversity and poverty of soil, is admirably adapted for testing vegetable growth. What will live there should flourish elsewhere. Fewer losses, however, have been suffered than was apprehended. Valuable instruction has been drawn from such misfortune, which it might be profitable to make known, were space and leisure available. Some of that instruction sets theory at defiance.

In this connection it may be proper to make due record of the planting of a fine *Centennial Elm*, the gift of our associate, Mr.

Hadwen, upon one of the most conspicuous spots in *Elm Park*. May it exist in perennial vigor, to show to our official successors, a hundred years hence, that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, A. D. 1876, held abiding faith in the ability of Worcester to pay its debts, to lay out broad and convenient avenues, to introduce sparkling and ornamental water, and to adorn and beautify its waste places !

The sentimental naturalist, like the fashionable lady, indulges in queer fancies. The one "anxious and aimless," forces a vent for her wealth of affection, and lavishes a barren love upon the Poodle or Spitz. The other begets, of his inner consciousness upon a scientific hallucination, and lo ! an aviary which shall save our PUBLIC GROUNDS from the plague of Insects. Man, as a general rule, ignores his friends. Agricola puts a bounty upon the slaughter of *crows*, and supplements the idiocy by petting and protecting the *Turdus migratorius*. Civis imports *Fringilla domestica*, (sparrow,) notes his gregarious habit and saying to himself, henceforth no more canker-worms ! not another caterpillar ! refers to accredited authorities which describe the new-comer as "noted for its familiarity and even impudence, its voracity and fecundity." For years has this COMMISSION, against its better judgment, fed and housed these feathered tramps. But recently the 'Eye of Argus' was diverted to them and the soft-hearted were besought to strew the snow with crumbs. This COMMISSION washes its hands of the whole business. Apologizing humbly for the lives saved heretofore, through grain put where it would do the least good ; and admitting that the PUBLIC GROUNDS produce nothing that ought to provoke even omnivorous appetite ; it is nevertheless a deliberate conclusion of the COMMISSION that the *Fringilla Domestica* should be referred to a Returning Board composed of Grain Growers, with instructions to reject every return that does not indicate intimidation or downright bull-dozing with the shot-gun. To show that this view is not prejudiced, nor the result of partial observation, it may be worth the while to incorporate, in this Report, the opinions of an English Farmer which cover the whole ground. It must be borne in mind, to weigh the full import of his language, that "corn" in England, does not mean Maize ; but is a



more comprehensive term, including, within its ample husk, wheat, rye, oats and barley. Agricola and Horticola, in America, can put their heads together and determine for themselves whether the canker-worm, and caterpillar; the curenlio, and cut-worm; need assistance in their ordinary work. Whereinsoever they fail, sure dependence can be placed on the sparrow. With a kindly trust that the official guardians of our local peace may be spared untimely interruptions at Draughts! though a sparrow should fall to the ground, unnoted: let us hearken to the voice of our English Mentor who says, in the Spring of 1876, that: .

“The late severe weather has made this little depredator more destructive than usual, especially on early Peas and Gooseberry buds. I had some William the First Early Peas 2 inches above ground and rodged, as I thought, safely: but, on looking at them to-day, the sparrows have made quite a wreck of them, and nets have been placed over the stakes on purpose to try to have the Peas untouched. Our 'Trans-Atlantic cousins having introduced the English Sparrow into the neighborhood of New-York are now finding out what a mistake they have made. In the March number of the *Philadelphia Gardener's Monthly*, a correspondent writes of it to the following effect: —

‘In some respects this little foreigner deserves our welcome. But his distant origin, and his cheery, home-loving ways, blind us to his betters at our doors. Before him we had native birds greedy for worms, more pretty of plumage and sweeter of song. We feed and pet this emigrant, but our own birds we shot and stoned till they found neither pluck or numbers to fight with the worms. He breeds so fast that, if each one only ate a few, their numbers would make havoc among the creeping tribes. A little colony of eight settled here four years ago, and have filled the town; but, as early birds after the worms they don't eat a cent's worth. Enough sparrows have squatted on my two acres to eat all the worms of a hundred and cry for more: yet the tormenting pests still strip my Gooseberry and Currant bushes right under one's nose. Nor does the sparrow hunt other worms any better and, in fact, as a help against our foes on leaf and fruit, I set down the English Sparrow as a failure and a fraud. But, worse than this, I fear we may yet find him as big a pest as the worms he promised to eat. Sad stories come to me of his picking out the fruit buds in the winter, and of his raids on the opening bloom of spring. Last year, near New Haven, a flock swept off, in a day, the promised crop of a whole orchard. Last winter, the squatters on my ground stripped my Currant bushes of half their buds: they served a large strawberry bed in the same style; and hunger could not be pleaded for such vandalism: — they shared with my fowls, plenty of small grain and garbage always within reach. These sorry habits, in such swarms of them as must soon fill the land, will by and by demand a premium for their scalps.’

“This correspondent expresses a wish, as Burns did of the ‘Dell,’ that the Sparrow might ‘tak a thocht and mend,’ but there is little chance of this from what we know of his habits in this country. Our farmers know to their cost the ravages Sparrows make on their ripening corn near the hedges, and to the grain in their stacks in the winter time; and it will be the same in other agricultural countries abroad where they have been introduced. We gardeners, like the farmers, likewise get blamed if we take means to keep their numbers

within bounds; and the number of their scalps taken must not be counted for 'Mr. Punch' to get hold of. The evil of acclimatising Sparrows and Rabbits, in America, as well as in our Australian colonies, was pointed out when these exportations were being made; and the results now show the soundness of the advice."

The work of finishing the esplanade, (if the term may be allowed,) around the Soldiers' Monument, upon the *Common*, was resumed at the first suitable opportunity. As some fault has been found that the task was not undertaken earlier in the season, it is proper to state that the contractor was unwilling to commence until all danger from frost was safely past. But, by that time, the note of preparation for the Fourth of July was heard, from all quarters; and it was thought best to wait until after the city had folded its tent. A letter to the Chairman of the Monument Committee so fully explained the whole transaction, that it is inserted here by the writer, partly that his own relation to the work may be understood and, as much, that the perplexities attaching to volunteer service may be better appreciated.

"No. 5 OAK ST., August 7, A. D. 1876.

TO GEORGE CROMPTON, Esq., Chairman of Monument Committee:

My Dear Sir.—I have just received from Mr. A. B. Lovell his Statement of Account for final work done around the Soldiers' Monument on the *Common*. I submit a general summary of my account, in this connection, to yourself as Chairman of the Monument Committee, to whose generous and unsolicited confidence it so chanced that I was entrusted with the original design and execution of the work. The 'sole care, superintendence, and management of the *Common*' is confided by the charter of the city, to the COMMISSION of which I have the honor to be Chairman. Respect for the limitations and restrictions of that Charter, in this direction, has, within my experience, incommoded but few of those whose interest or prejudice clashed with their obligations assumed in its support.

The work has been done under my individual oversight, where I deemed myself competent: especially and almost exclusively so in the case of repairing the original foundations of the Monument, whereof the defects had been disclosed by excavation. The very recent laying of a most superior pavement around the base of the Monument, was, as you are aware, contracted Mr. A. B. Lovell; enough of whose other work, throughout the city, attests to his competency, and none of whose personal interests conflicted with its surest fidelity to this later charge. My thorough faith in Mr. Lovell, however, did not prevent my own close observation of the progress and character of the work.

If your Committee are as well satisfied as I am, and as I believe are the community, there need be no regrets wasted over inevitable and well-considered delays.

The Statement of Account is appended:

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN, Chairman, &c., *Dr.*

In account with MONUMENT COMMITTEE.

Nov. 17, 1874,—Cash Deposited in Worcester National Bank,	\$600.00
Interest on above sum, . . . . .	38.86
July 20, 1875,—Cash deposited as above, . . . . .	400.00
Interest on balances, . . . . .	3.11
	<hr/> \$1041.97

PER CONTRA, *Cr.*

Cash paid Downey Bros., 680 yds. Cinders @ 37½ cts., . . .	\$236.25
“ “ labor and teams, . . . . .	86 75
	<hr/> \$323.00
Cash paid Daniel Sullivan, paving 59.8 sq. yds. Beach Stone	
Gutter, . . . . .	32.89
	<hr/> 855.89
Debit brought forward, . . . . .	1041.97
	<hr/> \$686.08

Account of A. Beaman Lovell, as submitted, . . . . .	\$863.00
Bill of Engineer's Department, Surveying, . . . . .	\$9.75
“ “ “ “ . . . . .	5.50
	<hr/> 15.25
	878.25
Apply funds on hand, . . . . .	686.08
	<hr/> \$192.17

You will perceive that the sum due and unpaid amounts to \$192.17.

My original design for the Concrete Base contemplated the laying of 260 yards. I repeatedly impressed, upon the Engineers, the hard fact that I had but a sum certain to expend, and that I would incur no liabilities in its excess. Subsequently, at our interview, you and I agreed that there should be thirty (30) yards additional, laid down toward the West, which would swell the aggregate to 290 yards.

Subtracting this excess above my estimate,—21 yards @ \$2.50 = \$52.50, and adding the charge for Engineering, \$15.25, from which in my innocence of “tricks that are vain,” I had supposed that this *Commission* might be exonerated by the city; you will perceive that the whole amount by which the deficit exceeds our mutual allowance is but \$24.42. And of that, almost the whole was consumed in a similar work to that in which you are now occupied, the *securing of a firm foundation!*

## STATED.

Due . . . . .	\$192.17
Engineer's excess, 21 yards . . . . .	\$52.50
Bill of Engineer's Department . . . . .	15.25
	<hr/> \$67.75

Leaving the sum of \$124.42 to which no exception can fairly be taken. Of this amount you voluntarily assumed the payment of one hundred dollars. And I doubt not, from my practical experience of their method of dealing, that the assumption of the entire debt of \$192.17, and its payment from out of the unexpended funds, in your hands, will commend itself to your Committee as an act of simple justice and as a wise disposition of that amount of money.

I make no apology for the time which I have consumed in executing the work that you wished me to undertake. I discovered unexpected obstacles, as I advanced: and, as I like to do my work once for all, resolved to avoid the haste which makes waste. When thoroughly prepared, I believe that the work was not suffered to lag. Personally, I am well content. If your Committee and yourself are satisfied, I can recall nothing to mind, in connection with the *Common*, or Monument, that need keep you away from Old Mald's Brook; or divert me from my usual occupation in a thankless service.

I inclose the several vouchers for the expenditures herein accounted for, which I desire that you should return when you have examined and found them sufficient. My Account Current is with the Monument Committee; and, making no return to any other authority, it is proper that I should preserve the vouchers for my own protection.

With the highest esteem,

I have the honor to subscribe myself

Very Respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

The account was settled, as requested in the above letter.

The Committee of which Mr. Crompton was Chairman, held, if it does not hold now, an unexpended sum—the remainder of the original Monument Fund. It is unlikely that the subscribers will ever receive a dividend; nor is the equity of any claim by the City especially obvious. Could the amount be applied towards defraying the cost of a JET D'EAU, as so often recommended in these Reports, it is believed that a most appropriate disposition would be made of it. There can be little doubt that such a step would be sanctioned by the public spirited citizens, whose contribution it was; and whose sole objection might that the Monument itself would thereby be eclipsed. Yet far might as well be found because one star differeth from another glory. The eye of the tired wayfarer; fatigued with the arid waste of brick, whether of wall or sidewalk; will find repose

in the lofty column and its flashing spray. The nurse maid and her precious charge will derive never-ceasing enjoyment from the spectacle, to which children of a larger growth would gravitate by an inevitable law of attraction. When France wishes to do her uttermost for the entertainment of illustrious guests, she simply puts in play *Les Grandes Eaux* of Versailles. A JET, carrying the full head from Leicester, would be the peer of any similar erection. On July Fourth, if in operation, it would doubtless afford as much genuine pleasure as a Tent; at less cost, and without such liability to *squalls*!

The URINALS, upon the Eastern and Southern sides of the Common, have been removed. This step was constrained by a necessity greater than that which they were designed to relieve. But they were not decently used: and this COMMISSION had neither means nor appliances to maintain them in sufficient cleanliness. "Yet it seems a pity," as was suggested in a former report; "not merely because their cost was considerable, but on account of the notorious fact that they inadequately meet a necessity of which no false delicacy should preclude the consideration; and for which public policy and decency absolutely demand a remedy. It might almost be said, without exaggeration, that the need of a Public Hospital was not more imperative."

That something should be substituted for them which, preserving decency, shall meet an absolute want, would appear scarcely to require statement or demonstration. Whenever and wherever located, it is hoped that Taste may preside at their construction. And the architect of the future might well emulate that fitness of things so conspicuous in the sightly edifice which supplements and crowns the Upper Gate-House at Old Maid's Brook, and whereof the overhang is almost vividly suggestive. This *Commission*, however, does not doubt that the *Honorable* BOARD of ALDERMEN, if merely in its capacity of a Board of Health, will prove equal to the situation. Meanwhile the *Common* is open to invasion by our Goths and Vandals under whose tread, like that of their ancient prototypes, it is safe to assume that nothing will remain green or clean.

The hope is indulged, though with little confidence, that the occupancy of the *Common*, by Railways, will shortly cease in

fact, as it long since legally determined. Since the 1st day of June, A. D. 1876, Freight and Passage Trains have been running uninterruptedly, upon the barest sufferance. For there is no one so simple as not to know that a license, by the Aldermen of a city, can convey no rights in the Common Highway adverse to its free enjoyment by the people. And the Railway Corporations were estopped from asserting such license, having applied to the General Court for the only valid extension of their original term, which extension was expressly limited to that date—the 31st of May. But, assuming from recent ebullitions at the City Hall that the Tracks are actually to be taken up, when those frogs get down, it will then become the duty of this *Commission* to grade and drain that long-neglected tract, according as appropriations shall be made by the HONORABLE COUNCIL. A prudent forethought long since provided abundant material for gutters. But suitable filling will have to be hauled from a distance; and cartage is expensive, even in these days of depression.

When this work shall be completed,—finishing the surface of the *Common*,—as now bounded, the COMMISSION will leave the protection of this PUBLIC GROUND substantially in the hands of the People. It is their property—to make or mar. If they desire a bright, green lawn; whose fresh neatness shall be complimented by strangers, as it is a pleasure to themselves; they must not only keep off the grass, personally, but see to it that the restriction is enforced upon others. This COMMISSION cannot be running constantly to the Police Office, each time a blockhead feels like manifesting his independence by open transgression of a reasonable rule. It is no part of their duty; and not even their large salary would compensate them for its voluntary assumption. One prediction, however, may be ventured:—that the Civil Service Reform will soon fall into contempt and desuetude, which defines Reform as Retention-in-Office, and Civil Service as cool indifference to the petty comforts and minor pleasures of the people.

The improvement of ELM PARK, of which a detailed account appears in the last Report of this COMMISSION, has progress steadily and with effect. If no startling advances have been made; the explanation must be sought and found,—in the la

of means to employ sufficient labor. Some constant visitors, however, to whose friendly interest and faithful supervision the COMMISSION would express their deep indebtedness, were quick to perceive that a great amount of work was accomplished during the year that has recently closed. The very considerable excavation, rendered possible by the open Winter and Spring;—in such striking contrast to the present season, throughout which to this date of writing not a stroke has been practicable by pick or spade; elicited favoring comment. Few, in the first flush of Spring, noticed that anything was doing: for their name is not legion who tramp diurnally, through mud and mire, in resolute “constitutional” amendment. And—for all who drove,—it demanded a level head and a keen eye to maintain a safe carriage through the throng upon our noble PARK AVENUE, without taking much heed of each new Ampelopsis by the Rock, or of the slightly greener lawn beyond. Ah! that was a throng, indeed! wherein the majority must guard their whiffletrees when ex-Aldermen *cut in*, with horses, rendered frantic by their sinuous course, and *will not keep to the right*. Such scrub-races, by the way, are not conducive to public work; for even the tired laborer is apt to lean upon his spade as he pursues, with fascinated gaze, the fluctuating fortunes of Bull-Dozer and mate,—Tender and True. But, all this while, the peat rests undisturbed in its original matrix.

Some years since, the COMMISSION, thanks to the generosity of Col. John W. Wetherell; and by the display of that wise prescience which is so suggestive of their descent from the prudent virgins; were enabled to cut and secure a large quantity of brush. This, fashioned into fascines, remained, for a long time, in an ugly heap, hugely astonishing the small boys that yet, be it said to their credit! withheld their lucifers. These fascines, supplemented by a lot of unmerchantable plank, enabled a driveway to be constructed over a bottom into which an iron rod had been easily plunged for its entire length of twenty (20) feet. Horses and carts were thus made available; and an amount of excavation performed that could have been effected, so well, in no other way, at an expense tenfold greater. However, just as everything was in successful operation, the rains descended and the floods



came ; yea verily, as the elements have no respect for dignitaries, even upon the just of Lynde Brook. But, in the little South Pool, whose area is less than one Acre, were already demonstrated, between sunset and sunrise, capabilities for a sheet of Ornamental Water that might well reward more patient and hopeless waiting. Somewhat has been achieved towards making the vision of that morning an abiding beauty. Whatever material could be, was got out ; a task in itself contingent upon the fluctuating stage of water. Meanwhile the entire shore line of the South Pool has been nicely sodded ; and may, with reason, be anticipated to supply a rich, if only natural, frame for its sparkling mirror.

A large portion of the PARK is of very uneven surface, and the herbage that covered it was sparse and of the coarsest nature. To remedy these defects, in some measure and, at the same time, to improve the grade ; a very considerable tract has been deeply and thoroughly broken up by the plough. Disintegrated by the frosts of the late Autumn and the snows of the existing Winter, it is hoped that great advantage will be derived from even such inconsiderable culture. For there is too much ground to be manured ; and the plough and harrow must supplement a deficiency that ought not to be tolerated so long as there is a City Barn. It would require the scrapings from the Highways, for scarce two seasons, to accomplish all the direct filling upon the PARK that is desirable. Fit for but little else,—that mess blends admirably with the cold peat of the PARK ; the two combining to form an admirable mixture, in course of time, for almost any species of vegetation. But,—than that the PUBLIC GROUNDS of the City should be accelerated in their march of improvement, through aid drawn from without their limits ;—better that all available material should be dumped at the City Barn, to fester and putrefy ; that it should be employed to build Highways, in about uniform layers of offal and typhus ; or that it should be hawked from pillar to post, to casual purchasers, whose dreary distances apart are the least possible objection ; and who, if served for nothing, would, under the modern system of double entry, be proved more profitable customers than the City itself through this COMMISSION. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC



GROUNDS have no personal ends to promote. They hold the solemn assurance, by the CITY COUNCIL, of its willingness to co-operate, to any reasonable extent, in all measures necessary for the improvement of the PUBLIC GROUNDS. If the City can spare the enormous revenue derived from the sale of street-scrapings, this COMMISSION would be pleased to receive them as a gift. Upon no other terms, as matters stand, could they be accepted. By their aid, the COMMISSION can advance the work of years. Deprived of them, the "same old bundle of straw will have to be threshed over again," and each new layer of dust dignified as original drift.

It will be observed that every source of revenue to the COMMISSION remains strictly closed. The Circus or Menagerie can no longer be admitted within the PUBLIC GROUNDS; and compensation fails with the withholding of privilege. Nothing has been received as yet, from those balances that were to be so cumbrous, on July 4th, and it is doubtful if the most fertile imagination will ever detect the growth of two blades of grass, where was but one before, from the stimulus of Holiday savings. The Marriage fees are seen but hazily,—as it were in a mirage,—whereof

*Auri sacra fames*

supplies shadow without substance. The very dogs career over the grass, or flounder in the Pools: but, when challenged by this COMMISSION to show a warrant for their longer toleration, they coolly refer to the Public Library, where dogs' ears are indicative of wisdom. Meanwhile no grist comes to our mill: and the "voice of the grinders is low" from very sickness of hope deferred.

In concluding this Report, literally prepared under difficulties, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS express the same unshaken faith in the permanent prosperity of Worcester that has lent color and life to their former communications. Whatsoever things were good—whatsoever things were lovely—came naturally to their thought: and the result has been of good report. Their fancy pictured the city environed with a broad Avenue, convenient for traffic and pleasant for travel: from which the whole community should derive advantage, and by whose use a keener zest of enjoyment and health should enure to those in

possession of sufficient leisure. It is given unto men to see visions and to dream dreams; yet it is vouchsafed to few to behold their realization. But the COMMISSION, from their constant engagement upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS, have been permitted to look upon the line of traction prolonged over PARK AVENUE, as its facilities for the passage of heavy freight became better understood. To the man confined rigidly to Main street, who can take no cognizance of anything that transpires off that great thoroughfare, this AVENUE may appear but an unprofitable investment. To that same man, after the cares of the day are over, that AVENUE will afford new life as, in due proportion, he inhales the exhilaration of motion and the oxygen of the atmosphere. Built wide, for common convenience; thoroughly built, for public comfort; built as flat as might be and allow the flow of surface water, nor spoiled, as are too many road-beds by the conceited ignorance which would substitute the hemisphere for its plane; it stretches out along the western edge of the City,—a constant pleasure to its original advocates and a singular fascination for its irrational foes. Its immediate extension to the intersection of Leicester, with Stafford, Streets, is a measure of public policy which should be conceded to that numerous body of petitioners who so fully represent the wealth and intelligence of Webster Square. The route is short;—the materials are upon the spot;—the labor is waiting. The time to do a thing which is inevitable, is that time when it can be done to the best advantage. And the completion of a work that is both inevitable and expedient, cannot be delayed long without incurring a responsibility that no servant of the People should covet. That the community expect, in civic administration, a wise frugality which shall husband instead of exhaust their close savings, is a statement exacting no demonstration. Nor can it be denied that they intend that such frugality shall be consistent with and make allowance for each proved demand for thorough, practical education; the very most efficient means for the check and extinction of fire; as well as every reasonable requisition of Traffic and Travel. It needs not to underrate the depression in all departments of business; nor to forget how much of the accumulated wealth of Worcester has been actually and utterly

consumed within a few years. But that depression was not restricted to this City: and for the real waste of our substance a sure reparation must be sought in the ready genius and elastic energy that have ever proved equal to the public good. Despondency will neither restore nor revive our fortunes. In the terse phrase of the Latin Satirist:—

“Æquam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem; nous secus in bonis, ab insolenti  
Temperatam lætitia.”

The little village which, within the memory of some who may peruse these lines, developed under the influence of Stage-Coach and District-School to its present slightly proportions; will not sink into decrepitude, now that every Avenue is threaded by its Railway,—each hill-top crowned with its Academy. Cherishing a manly self-reliance, let us in our day and generation, foster the inheritance transmitted by our fathers; and resolve, under Providence, to do all within our power to promote individual comfort and public growth. As there can be no life in stagnation, so can there be no thrift from inertia. While the just demands of the past should be respected, it must not be forgotten that the present will have and insist upon its own imperative claims. The Thirty Thousand (30,000) inhabitants, in 1865, with a valuation of Nineteen Millions (\$19,000,000), were convinced of the vital necessity to them of ample Water, with adequate Sewers. Unfortunately, they were not as well persuaded of the importance of paying as they went. Nevertheless the Water and Sewers were introduced; and now the population of the City is computed at Fifty Thousand (50,000), and the valuation at Forty-Eight Millions (\$48,000,000). Is that gain of Twenty Thousand (20,000) inhabitants an appreciable factor in our prosperity? Does the increase of Thirty Millions (\$30,000,000) in valuation, represent a gigantic delusion? Or have we, in fact, profited by the foresight and energy which, if it anticipated the wants of years, in greater ratio precipitated upon us wealth and population. One thing may be noted: that the apostles of inertia; those who eternally croak forth the gospel of doing nothing because it may cost something; do not har-

monize their practice with their creed. A measure that will promote their own interests is ever seasonable. A street that will bisect, or wholly occupy, some of their ineligible land, cannot be built too soon, even though it require a mandamus for its construction. It is only when the project looks to the development of the entire city; when it is advocated, with no ulterior aims, by those who can comprehend a public benefit uninfluenced by private greed; then it is that we are reminded by our vigilant guardians of the municipal—and *their own*—weal, that Worcester is dead,—*felo-de-se*,—and that administration should issue at once to save the poor remnants of the estate. Yet people cling and flock to the City; its inhabitants maintain a stubborn contest for existence, although heavily handicapped by class legislation and frauds in bankruptcy; its schools thrive and acquire a good name for themselves and the municipality; and the advance, from year to year, if not so abrupt as in the past, bears every token of soundness and permanence.

Throughout all, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, put forth their plea for the useful and ornamental. They urge the completion of PARK AVENUE to Stafford and Leicester Streets, as a measure of obvious public necessity. They call attention to the exclusion of the people from the Northern shores of Lake Quinsigamond; and remind the HONORABLE COUNCIL that the completion of LAKE AVENUE toward the Poor Farm will pierce all recent obstructions and restore the enjoyment of old privileges. They measure the dimensions of the City Reservoir; and, finding that its utmost capacity falls far short of an adequate supply; re-affirm their opinion that a Reservoir upon NEWTON HILL would supplement a probable deficiency and furnish a head of “eminent gravity.” They believe that these measures would subserve the public welfare. They feel assured that their value to the community would immeasurably transcend their cost. And they know that, of such cost, they must bear their proportion as citizens and taxpayers.

And if the views of the true policy to be adopted, and un-  
viatingly pursued, by this Municipality, need support; they will re-inforce them by the remarks of a distinguished fellow-citizen

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\*Hon. William W. Rice.

whose faithfulness over the few things of the Mayoralty, not less than his fidelity in every other position of trust, has led to his promotion to the Halls of Congress. The lapse of sixteen (16) years has not deprived those remarks of a singular pertinence to this time and occasion :

“ In calling your attention, therefore, to the various departments of affairs, which are about to pass under our control and management, I shall offer few, if any, new suggestions, premising that, while the still depressed condition of business justifies and demands a strict economy in all our appropriations, that is sometimes most truly found in generous expenditure.”

All which is Respectfully Submitted by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, January 29th,*

*A. D., 1877.*



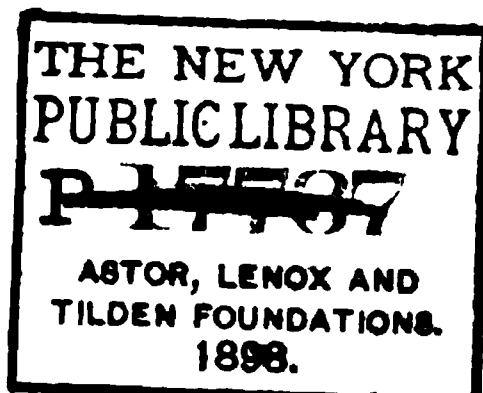
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
COMMISSION  
OF  
PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
WORCESTER, MASS.,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1877.

WORCESTER:  
PRESS OF NOYES, SNOW & CO.,  
47 MAIN STREET.







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# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL:*

The "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same," during the past year, is herewith submitted by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, in accordance with the requirements of the Twenty-First Section of the Charter of the City:—

*City of Worcester*

In account with

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

	<i>Dr.</i>	
To Appropriation for current year,	.	\$3,000 00
Sale of grass on Elm Park,	.	40 00
Sale of old lumber,	.	3 00
		<hr/>
		\$3,043 00
	<i>Per Contra,</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
<i>January :</i>		
Steven Rowe, labor in December, 1876,	.	\$39 37
David Rowe, " " "	.	29 75
Kinnicutt & Co., rope and shovels,	.	7 87
M. McGrath, teams,	.	12 00
<i>Februarg :</i>		
Kinnicutt & Co., snow shovel,	.	70
Steven Rowe, labor (January),	.	43 75

*March :*

Charles Hamilton, (Annual Report), . . . . .	\$34 37
Steven Rowe, labor, (February), . . . . .	40 25
Kinnicutt & Co., wheelbarrow, . . . . .	2 25

*April :*

David Rowe, labor (January), . . . . .	26 25
Highway Department, scrapings in Oct., 1876, . . . . .	7 00
Benjamin C. Jaques, materials, labor and trucking, . . . . .	74 80
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	45 48
M. McGrath, labor, . . . . .	48 00

*May :*

Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	39 37
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	18 37
M. McGrath, labor and teams, . . . . .	88 75
B. C. Jaques, cedar posts, . . . . .	40 00
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed and oats, . . . . .	27 10
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	1 69
James Draper, trees (317) and planting same on Jefferson and Shrewsbury streets, . . . . .	357 00
O. B. Hadwen, trees (116) and planting same, . . . . .	136 00
H. M. Hubbard, manure and hauling, . . . . .	22 50
F. H. Mills, 4½ days labor, marking for trees, . . . . .	9 00

*June :*

M. McGrath, labor and teams, . . . . .	111 37
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	40 25
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	43 75
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	5 47
O. B. Hadwen, trees (142) and planting same, . . . . .	122 94
V. K. Nash, marking distances for trees, . . . . .	3 88
C. O. Richardson, patching sidewalks, . . . . .	7 25
B. C. Jaques, tree-guards, labor, &c., . . . . .	13 60
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, &c., . . . . .	2 61

*July :*

Charles H. Perry, pruning trees, . . . . .	11 90
J. S. Clarke & Son, cement, &c., . . . . .	1 75
James Draper, labor on guards, &c. . . . .	7 50
Kinnicutt, & Co., tools, . . . . .	2 56
J. & J. A. Rice, tools, . . . . .	1 70
J. B. O'Leary, labor, &c., . . . . .	1 20
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 87
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	44 62
M. McGrath, labor, . . . . .	76 50

*August :*

Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	2 75
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 87
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 87
M. McGrath, labor, . . . . .	72 75
James Draper, shrubs and trees, . . . . .	50 00

## PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

*September :*

Wm. H. Sawyer, spruce plank, . . . . .	\$5 16
Kinnicutt & Co, tools, . . . . .	4 75
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	44 19
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	43 75
M. McGrath, labor, . . . . .	84 89
Water Department 393½ feet of pipe, laying same, couplings and valves, . . . . .	157 28

*October :*

David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	40 25
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	45 50
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	16 50
M. McGrath, labor, . . . . .	25 50
George T. Sutton, repairing pumps, . . . . .	15 50
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	4 85
C. H. Perry, pruning trees, . . . . .	11 00
H. M. Hubbard, manure, hauling and spreading, . . . . .	23 50
Michael McGrath, teams and labor, . . . . .	42 75

*November :*

C. F. Henry, manure and hauling, . . . . .	41 42
E. S. Knowles, manure and hauling, . . . . .	39 00
Downey Brothers, manure and hauling, . . . . .	20 05
C. H. Perry, pruning trees, . . . . .	23 40
Sumner, Pratt & Co., marlin and listing, . . . . .	93
Benj. C. Jaques, labor on trees, . . . . .	6 60
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	40 24
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 00
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	36 00
Michael McGrath, labor, . . . . .	36 00
James Draper, 138 shrubs (assorted), . . . . .	33 00
O. B. Hadwen, trees and planting, . . . . .	74 96

*December :*

Steven Rowe, labor to Nov. 21st, inclusive, . . . . .	30 62
David Rowe, " " " " . . . . .	29 74
Michael Kennedy, labor to Nov. 17th, inclusive, . . . . .	21 00
Michael McGrath, " " " " . . . . .	21 00
Kinnicutt & Co., gravel rake, . . . . .	1 00
J. & J. A. Rice, pick axe handles, . . . . .	1 75
" " handle to shovel, . . . . .	50
Brooks & Wheeler, manure and hauling, . . . . .	68 12

Aggregate Expenditures, . . . . .	\$3,037 28
Carried to Sinking Fund, . . . . .	5 72
	<hr/>
	\$3,043 00

The Railway-tracks are at last removed from the *Common*, where they shall be known no more forever. The task proposed to itself by this COMMISSION, many a weary year since, of freeing that Public Ground from encumbrance, whether by long sufferance or encroachment, has been achieved in greater measure than was believed possible by the community at large. The number of sceptics was by no means as limited as the minority at our late civic election, who were bigoted in their faith that the tracks of the railway corporations were as fixed as the earth upon which they had been located. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, however, without arrogating to themselves that "faith which can remove mountains," never distrusted the might of the People when fully aroused and animated with a set purpose to resume their own. Cajoled and coerced they might have been at one time, but who should divert or arrest the popular movement, when impelled by a sense of annoyance and wrong that could not plead necessity for longer toleration. Official indifference or inertia were the hardest to overcome. It actually seemed as if the indolence of the municipal authorities was affected sympathetically; and that nothing would be allowed to shake the chronic reluctance at the City Hall to disturb those sleepers.

Yet the fatal facility which assents or endures, in Town Meeting, as the simplest mode of despatching an Article in the Warrant that is not fully understood, can be hardened into a relentless determination when instructed in its rights by those who have no sinister aims. The agents of recovery and reclamation may volunteer from the first families, or furnish substitutes from those later and equally worthy; but all the same is that work of reclamation completed when it crowns unselfish labor, and restores to the toil-worn and weary one more chance for the enjoyment of earth and air, which is all the sweeter that it challenges no complaint for trespass.

As a contribution to local history, and for a warning to the community against a concession, in future, of privileges that are invaluable, however impossible of calculation, a full record is here made of the successive steps in this dull official progress:—

PUBLIC GROUNDS.

7

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Massachusetts, April 19th, A. D. 1877. }

FRANCIS T. BLACKMER, Esq., *City Solicitor*.

*My Dear Sir:*—Will you furnish me at your earliest convenience, with your opinion upon the following subject, to wit:

The legal tenure or occupancy of the *Common*, by Railroad Corporations, under Legislative grant, having expired by limitation; and the subsequent continued sufferance of such occupancy by the *City Council* having long since determined; Is there any reason, sufficient in law or equity, that should prevent the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, clothed as it is by the *Charter* with the "sole care, superintendence and management of the Public Grounds belonging to said City of Worcester," from proceeding to "lay out such part of said Public Grounds" heretofore occupied by railway tracks, causing "all necessary paths and avenues to be constructed" therein.

I have the honor to remain, Very Respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,  
*Chairman.*

OFFICE OF CITY SOLICITOR,  
Worcester, Mass., April 21, 1877. }

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, *Chairman of Commission of Public Grounds.*

*Dear Sir:*—In reply to your communication of April 19th, I would say that it is my opinion that upon the completion of the Union Depot (which has taken place) the provisions of Chapter 343 of the Acts of 1871, discontinued the R. R. location across the Common: that, as the matter now stands, in the absence of any action by the City Government, the Commission have a right to proceed at once to construct "all necessary paths and avenues" across said location.

Yours Respectfully,

F. T. BLACKMER,  
*City Solicitor.*

Upon the receipt of that opinion, a letter, whereof the subjoined is a copy, was addressed and mailed simultaneously to the Norwich & Worcester, and the Worcester & Nashua R. R. Corporations:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Massachusetts, April 30th, A. D. 1877. }

*Gentlemen:*

I am advised by the City Solicitor that your "location" over and across the *Common*, in this City, is discontinued by virtue of the completion of the Union Station, under the provisions of Chapter 343 of the Acts of A. D. 1871.

Offers of material for filling in the excavation upon that "location" are necessarily declined, to the pecuniary detriment of the city, because of the continued maintenance of your railway.

I have to request that you will cause your track (materials, etc.), to be removed as soon as possible, that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS may be enabled to construct "necessary paths and avenues" across and along said "location."

I have the honor to subscribe myself, Very Respectfully.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

To one of those letters a reply was received, as follows:—

WORCESTER & NASHUA RAILROAD Co. }  
President's Office, Worcester, Mass., May 4th, 1877. }

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Esq., *Commission of Public Grounds.*

*Dear Sir:*—Your favor of 30th inst. is received, requesting this company to remove its tracks from the Common. We are willing and desirous of doing so, and should have removed the tracks before now, were it not for the probability that the Foster Street Extension, when made, will make it necessary for us to pass over the Common with our freight trains, while the *Bridge* over Mechanic Street is being placed in position. If the Mayor and Aldermen will request us to remove our tracks from the Common, *knowing the reason why we have not done so*, we will remove them at once.

You will confer a favor by showing this letter to the Mayor and Aldermen, that they may understand our views in regard to the matter.

Yours most truly,

F. H. KINNICUTT,

*President.*

This note from Mr. Kinnicutt was received on the 5th of May, and shown, as therein requested. Upon the 8th of May a communication from the *City Clerk* conveyed to the COMMISSION additional, if not astonishing, evidence that the interests of the Corporations were in no imminent peril.

In Board of Aldermen, May 7, 1877.

ORDERED:—That the Railroad Corporations be, and they hereby are, authorized to allow the tracks to remain across the Common, to be used while the new bridge shall be building over the Foster Street extension, but to be used only during such building.

Approved May 9th, 1877.

CHARLES B. PRATT, *Mayor.*

(A copy), Attest,

E. H. TOWNE, *City Clerk.*

Who shall say, hereafter, in view of this facile response to the declared wishes of the Corporations, and conscious whence that Order emanated, that one (Alder) man cannot serve two masters?



In that respectful deference to the *City Council*, or either of its branches, even when it seemed to encroach upon the authority conferred upon this COMMISSION by the *Charter*; or to assume to extend privileges that had been finally and forever determined by the *General Court*; which has ever governed their actions, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS could not but halt in their efforts to reclaim full and entire possession of the *Common*. What did it matter, even though, according to the *Evening Gazette* of May 9th,

“The Norwich & Worcester Railroad workmen began the removal of their disused tracks, yesterday, with the intention of having the Highway Commissioner put Mechanic, Front and Park Streets in order afterwards, but suspended the work on notification from him that the work in putting the streets in safe and passable condition must be done by them or at their expense.”

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS could ride no such high horse. They desired, and would be content with anything, but that the *Common* should be restored to its original condition. The log of the Ark appears to have been lost beyond recovery. In its default, the memory of the oldest inhabitant was vainly racked, yielding no trace of aught but that Indian file through the slough wherefrom the

“We won’t go home ’till Morning,”

of some heavily freighted reveller from Worthington’s, might well blend time and tune with the hoarser

*De Profundis Clamavi*

of Lyman Beecher’s Forty Days Revival.

The COMMISSION could do nothing, meanwhile, but become passive and somewhat tired spectators of the quarrel about the prospective Foster Street and its possible construction. Had it not been for the Opinion of the *Solicitor*, in former years, that Burial Grounds are not Public Grounds in the especial sense of the trust committed to them, they might even have been induced to swell the already crowded array of senior wranglers. For it was a serious puzzle to them how they should “cause shade and ornamental trees to be planted” along that sheer cut which was so summarily ordered; where, with

the bodies of the "rude fore-fathers of the hamlet" hustled to either side, a retaining wall of skeletons might serve, like the grim monitor at Egyptian festivals, to point a moral or a warning. Their hallucination, if such it was, may perhaps be pardoned, that greater impatience was manifested to accelerate action, by *mandamus*, where real or fancied private interests were to be subserved, than to urge, or even encourage an effort by the *City Government*, to regain for the People their inexpressible Right to the uninterrupted transit and enjoyment of their Public Grounds. It is as true now, as ever, that what is everybody's business becomes that of nobody. And scarcely any one cared to exert himself (ready as he might be to grumble), to recover the rights that had been incautiously yielded, or relaxed, in one of those impulses of thriftless generosity which sometimes run away with the better judgment of a Town Meeting.

The Summer wore away and Autumn had nearly expired, without a change in the situation. But relief came from an unexpected quarter. The heap of refuse brick, and of rubbish accumulated against need, grew daily more unpleasantly conspicuous to the occupants of handsome counting-rooms, in the newer warehouses upon Front Street; some of whom were in an official position to give effect to their disgust. So that, upon the 12th day of November, decisive action was at last authorized:

CITY OF WORCESTER,

In City Council, Nov. 12, 1877.

**ORDERED:**—That the Highway Commissioner and Commissioner on Public Grounds, under the direction of the Committee on Highways, be instructed at once to remove from the Common, also from Mechanic, Front and Park Streets, the Railroad track now remaining there, and deposit the same in the yard of the City Stables, or dispose of them as they may think proper, and to grade up and put in safe and suitable condition the location of said road. The expense attending such removal of tracks to be charged to the R. R. Corporation owning said tracks.

Approved Nov. 13, 1877.

CHARLES B. PRATT, *Mayor*.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, not being subject to "instruction" from the *City Council*; nor required by the Charter to act "under the direction of the Committee on High-

ways," concluded that the execution of this order might very properly be left with the Commissioner of Highways, whose energetic action and ready command of suitable appliances could be thoroughly trusted. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS gave its counsel and aid, when asked. In what manner those Tracks were "disposed of" need not be explained here. The Highway Commissioner has a peculiar way of finding use for things, e. g.: those crystals, of which, on this 26th of January, a new harvest impends, that must gratify him the more that he has relinquished the ice-business.

The ground being cleared from encumbrance, a lack of means was the sole obstacle to its improvement. And, upon a suggestion from the *Chairman* of this COMMISSION, the necessary provision was made:

In City Council, Nov. 26, 1877.

**ORDERED** :—That the Commissioner (*sic*) of Shade Trees and Public Grounds be, and he is hereby authorized to cause the Railroad Track-bed on the Common to be graded; (estimated expense three hundred dollars [\$300]); and this amount charged to appropriation for Shade Trees and Public Grounds, and the Auditor is authorized to transfer this amount from Incidental Expenses to the above Department.

Approved Nov. 27, 1877.

CHARLES B. PRATT *Mayor*.

The ready co-operation of the Highway Department, with its trained teams and labor, enabled the COMMISSION to anticipate the Winter, now imminent. The piles of material, gathered from every possible source for two years past, in expectation of this use for them, were rapidly moved and leveled. It would have better pleased the Chairman of this COMMISSION, could more time have been spared for the job, in order that the broken bricks and stone might be assorted and deposited in a separate course at the bottom. Yet it is believed that the whole mass will pack together solidly; and if not, as now constituted, that it can be made to bind by a moderate application of brains.

This Commission was never in the habit of proclaiming its plans far in advance of their achievement. It may not be out of place here to state that its design, for the improvement of so much of the *Common* as was covered by the R. R. Location, was early formed; and that all the work hitherto accomplished,

whether of grading or drainage, will easily harmonize with that design. With a reasonable appropriation by the *City Council*, the paving-stones heretofore provided, can be utilized in the completion and construction of all necessary gutters; and such walks as were unavoidably left unfinished, may be completed in accordance with the actual condition of the ground. When that task shall be finished, it must depend upon the Executive Department of the City Government, what appearance the *Common* shall preserve. The community in general are as reluctant as this COMMISSION must naturally be, to see new and needless paths grooved into ruts, by careless or rude persons who will not pay heed to a reasonable requirement. The *Charter* authorizes the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS "to make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust, not inconsistent with this Act and the laws of the Commonwealth, as they shall deem expedient." But of what avail are "by-laws and regulations" without power to give them effect? If no more, the Police indeed might enforce the bare prohibition which forbids aught that tends to "disfigure" the Public Grounds. Should not the Police voluntarily incline to do this, the Mayor and Aldermen may well apply a gentle constraint to accelerate and strengthen such infirmity of purpose.

A statement of this Special Account of the COMMISSION is herewith submitted:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

In Special Account with the *City of Worcester*.

*Dr.*

To Appropriation for grading R. R. Locations on the <i>Common</i> ,	\$300 00
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<i>Per Contra,</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
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Paid Account of Highway Department, viz :

46½ hours Foremen, at 30,	\$13 95	
408 hours men at 15,	61 20	
90 hours teams at 50,	45 00	
	<hr/>	\$120 15
J. & J. A. Rice, tools,	\$12 50	
Steven Rowe, labor,	13 90	
David Rowe, labor,	13 57	
Michael McGrath, labor,	10 13	
Michael Kennedy, labor,	10 13	
	<hr/>	60 23
		<hr/>
		\$180 38

Unexpended to Sinking Fund,

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\$119 62

The suggestion that the Kerb-Stone, which now confines the southern line of the *Common*, upon Park Street, should be continued until it has been made to surround the whole territory, is earnestly renewed. The work can be done as slowly and economically as shall accord with the financial policy of the City, for the time being. When done, it would be the most thorough and suitable fence; and the only one that a correct taste would sanction. 'As heretofore advised, it should be suffered to enclose all of Salem Square that is not absolutely required for streets, there being no more reason why the City should furnish wood-yards than gratuitous space for the storage and sale of lumber, stone or brick. Besides which, the ground actually *belongs* to the *Common*.

The COMMISSION also repeat their recommendation of former years, that the *Common* should be ornamented with a Fountain, or *Jet d' Eau*. A suitable location was long since designated by permanent metes and bounds, which only awaits the appropriation of sufficient means to be utilized. The cost of such a fountain need not be so very large as to oppress the tax-payers, At most, it could not exceed the sum "covered into" the treasury from that subscription of citizens for a soldiers' monument; to which the claim of the city was never so apparent, as to exempt it from a doubt that it might have been applied to a purpose more in consonance with the object of its contribution. For the present, the COMMISSION are content to keep the idea of a Fountain before the people. With characteristic patience, they can defer its realization until the demand for it becomes too imperative to be denied.

When all that is within their power shall be accomplished; when the broad mall that is proposed shall be gravelled and rolled hard, and the other walks are conformed to it, according to the original design, the COMMISSION can but await the action of the People as represented in the *City Council*. The restriction of Salem Square within narrower limits; the continuation of the new and ornamental Kerb-Stone in lieu of a fence; and the erection of a Fountain or *Jet d' Eau*; each and all have passed beyond the range of suggestion, and reduce themselves simply to subjects for adequate and timely appropriation. The

duty of the *Commission* is discharged when it has recommended such improvements of the Public Grounds as seem to them advisable. Their faith is not adequate to move or remove mountains:—how much less, then, the Auditor and City Treasurer. No sop from them will appease and cajole the vigilant *Cerberi* who gnash their teeth over the public money. “Ask and it shall be given!” saith the Scripture: State what you need! writes the *Auditor*, and verily your appropriation shall be reduced. The COMMISSION do not complain; they merely wish that the whole people would understand that they are no more capable than others of compelling one dollar to do the work of two. The present members of the COMMISSION would be glad to finish some of their cherished plans within their terms of office. If unable, because their means are inadequate, the task must be left for their more competent and fortunate successors.

As elsewhere alluded to somewhat sharply, the COMMISSION cannot enforce the protection of the Public Grounds, although there is no end to the Rules that they are authorized to frame and adopt. It is not their fault that a needless and unsightly path-way has been worn across the lawn from Portland Street; nor that man, woman and child are suffered to trample at will between Main Street and the late R. R. Location. In the language of a former Report, which anticipated the removal of the Railway-tracks by a twelve-month, and to whose forcible expression nothing requires to be added;—when this work shall be completed,—finishing the surface of the *Common*,—as now bounded, the COMMISSION will leave the protection of this PUBLIC GROUND substantially in the hands of the People. It is their property—to make or mar. If they desire a bright, green lawn; whose fresh neatness shall be complimented by strangers, as it is a pleasure to themselves; they must not only keep off the grass, personally, but see to it that the restriction is enforced upon others. This COMMISSION cannot be running constantly to the Police Office, each time a blockhead feels like manifesting his independence by open transgression of a reasonable rule. It is no part of their duty; and not even their large salary would compensate them for its voluntary assumption. One prediction, however, may be ventured:—that the Civil Service Reform will

soon fall into contempt and desuetude, which defines Reform as Retention-in-Office, and Civil Service as cool indifference to the petty comforts and minor pleasures of the people.

Injuries to the *Shade and Ornamental Trees* of the city, along its Streets and throughout the Public Grounds, have been frequent and wanton. Upon the 3d day of May, the attention of the Chairman was called to the fact that Nineteen (19) thrifty young trees, upon the North line of Shrewsbury Street, were seriously mutilated. They had been planted but the day previous. Some Yankee by birth, or adoption (the backs of the "Vandals" are raw from their burdens of misrepresentation, and they are not suspected), had put his jack-knife to its worst use and, pared off the bark, in many instances, as high up as it could be reached.

Between the 5th and 6th days of May, but one or two days after the above outrage, every other trunk in a continuous row of White Ash trees upon the Northern line of *Elm Park*, and designed to afford shade to Highland Street, were cut partially through and then snapped off short.

Believing it to be about time for something to be done, or at least attempted, to remedy this state of affairs, the Chairman of the COMMISSION addressed a note to *Alderman Dickinson*, inquiring whether planting should be stopped or malicious mischief repressed. The response of that gentleman, who has ever cherished a kindly feeling for the aims and efforts of this COMMISSION, will be found in the following Order, introduced by him and passed unanimously by the *City Council* :—

#### CITY OF WORCESTER.

In City Council, May 7, 1877.

**ORDERED** :—That the Mayor be and he hereby is authorized, in behalf of the City, to offer a reward of Fifty Dollars (\$50) to any party or parties who shall furnish the evidence which shall lead to the conviction of any person or persons who shall wilfully mutilate or destroy any shade-tree planted by the City or individuals upon any of the Public Streets or Grounds thereof.

May 9, 1877. Approved.

CHAS. B. PRATT, *Mayor*.

Which all meant well enough, but was scarcely more comprehensive than that Municipal Ordinance whereof the prohibition,—



No person shall dig up, cut down, climb, break, peel, cut, deface, injure or destroy, any ornamental or shade tree, shrub or vine, growing and being in any of the streets or highways, or on any of the Public Lands of said City, without the consent of the Commissioners of Public Grounds first obtained therefor in writing,

might appear to concern the City Marshal and his Assistants, it being their sworn duty

“to enforce and carry into effect all laws and City Ordinances, and to be vigilant to detect and punish any breach thereof.”

For such service is a Police-force created and paid: and, were there good and sufficient reason why their duties should be discharged vicariously, assuredly none can be alleged to show that their substitutes should be furnished by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Upon the 28th day of August, ult., Seventeen (17) stout and thrifty White Ash and Maple trees, that had been planted early in Spring along the Northerly line of Shrewsbury Street, were found to have been incised and thereafter snapped short off. Upon the 31st of October the mutilation was discovered of Weymouth or White Pines, which were set out for a wind-break to Park Avenue; and of fine specimens of the *Spiræa Aurea* (golden Spiræa), that had grown into sightly ornaments of *Elm Park*. Upon the 30th of December, young Maples were observed, on Vernon Street, where it was evident from their condition when seen, that some tramp had less use for his time than for his jack-knife. All these cases of injury came within the personal notice of the Chairman: he has not had the heart to ask his associates what they have witnessed, in addition.

Scarcely a day passes that some member of the Police-force does not see horses fastened to street-trees or their guards, in open violation of the Ordinance. Oftener still can trees be found, upon their regular beats, whose freshly gnawed bark indicates how easily the offending animal might be detected, and his owner held to his direct responsibility. It is not too much to assert that nearly all of the visible damage to the shade-trees along our streets might be prevented by the exercise of a good deal less than that vigilance which, on Dec. 30th ult., according to the newspapers, “arrested a boy on the *Common* in a beastly state of intoxication.” It must be admitted, however,



that the boy could make no resistance: and besides, being a boy, was not yet possessed of a vote.

Perhaps a few words of admonition from the teachers in our Public Schools might tend to the better security of the property of the City in its ornamental and shade-trees. That intrusive and incessant supervision which takes heed to the ways of the obvious and devious truant; curbing his pugilism and veneering his deportment, may well include the Public Grounds within its strained jurisdiction. Wanton or heedless mischief could supply a subject for admonition, and the mutilation or destruction of shrub or tree be made the ready occasion for compulsory leaning over a chair. Persistence in forbidden practices, or continuous breach of the regulations of this COMMISSION, might require a more strenuous application of the rule-r (?) of right. Nowhere than in the old philosophy of the schools was it a sounder axiom that, as the twig is bent, the tree inclines.

Both shade and ornamental trees (if shrubs may be thereby intended,) have been planted, during the past year, in unusual number. Nearly seven hundred trees were set out under the express direction of the COMMISSION along our avenues and streets: and at least one hundred more must have been given out to individuals, for the same purpose, from the growing nursery at the S. W. corner of Elm Park. Of which nursery it may be pertinent in this connection to remark, that it needs to be thinned; and that the COMMISSION will gladly furnish young elms and maples, in the coming Spring, to applicants desirous of planting them along the public streets.

In pursuance of the policy that has governed the COMMISSION for some years past; and which is better approved the more it is followed; certain Streets were selected and trees were then planted by their sides, in continuous rows, as far as was in any way practicable. Somewhat farther, in Shrewsbury Street, some have thought, who did not fully comprehend the plan or hopes of the COMMISSION. It was no part of their original design to plant along the causeway. Nevertheless, when their instructions were exceeded, the trees, there set out, served a most useful purpose. For public attention was forcibly directed to the extreme narrowness of a most important Street; upon

which the Commonwealth has made an immense investment; and whereof the use, whether for business or pleasure, large at present, can scarcely be overestimated for the future. The subsequent widening of that road-bed is ample compensation for the slight cost of a few trees; or would be, had that widening been the cause of their destruction. But "strait and narrow as the way," it was not the loaded team that crashed against them: but the hand of man which was lifted in their despite. Their appearance was gladly hailed by the sturdy wagoners who toil under the July sun, across that torrid waste of road; and to whom came grateful visions of pleasant shade in a not remote future. It will not have been the fault of this COMMISSION that those anticipations are disappointed. And while it may not be expedient, at once, to replace the trees which were destroyed, nor perhaps until there can be some reasonable assurance that their substitutes will be secure from malicious injury, yet the intention of the COMMISSION to adorn and shade Shrewsbury Street with a thrifty and vigorous row of trees must be finally achieved. The credit of the City demands that this should be done: for a more forlorn landscape than the present could scarcely be offered to the view of the Governor of the Commonwealth, as he makes his annual visit of inspection to the Hospital for those Insane, *who are not chronic*.

Work in ELM PARK was resumed, as soon as possible, in the early Spring of 1877. Excavation of the dirt, whence desired, was rendered comparatively easy by the inconsiderable depth to which frost had penetrated in the preceding Winter. The channel designed to connect the Oval Pool, at the North; with the Diamond Pool that will ultimately constitute the central link of the liquid chain, was cleared out at first. A passage was thus opened for the escape of the water that had accumulated from melting snows; and which, from lack of an outlet, was effectually dammed back. The diminution of this flood exposed the dykes of peat which were retained to aid in the original formation of the Diamond Pool; and the task of removing them was at once commenced. It became quickly evident that more satisfactory progress could be made, were the water drawn off entirely: and the gate of the Flume was accordingly

raised to effect this object. That the beds of the Pools were not wholly drained is owing, as much as to anything, to the fact that water will not run up hill : in a fatuous attempt to ignore, or subvert which Law of Nature, the Park sewer was originally planned by the engineering of former and flush days. The level was, however, so far reduced as to permit the almost complete removal of those dykes : a process that the wind and waves will doubtless substantially finish. Could the bottom have been wholly exposed, the COMMISSION would have felt strongly impelled to cover it throughout with a foot in thickness of gravel, from one of those beds that lie in such tempting proximity. There are various reasons why it is desirable that this should be done. Chief among which may be accounted the shoaling of the water by raising the bottom of the Pool with a material that will solidify as it is deposited, aiding in clarification also ; and the relief of the average parental mind from anxiety, by convincing it that the feet of the budding skater or sailor shall no longer mire inextricably. Three (3) feet is about the depth that the COMMISSION desire and have planned to maintain, and wherefrom they trust that there shall not be variance whether in flood or drought. The Pools will thus preserve that peculiar loveliness of sheets of Ornamental Water which is due to the evenness of their banks, and the sparkling limpidity that is never suffered to stagnate into foulness. The danger to boys and girls, who wish to skate when the ice will bear, is but slight at the worst ; but there need be none. We cannot afford to measure the security of our children by the few inches that their altitude may chance to surpass the risks of accident. A majority of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS have done their duty, as heads of families, as the tables of the census will show ; and without going back upon the minority, they are willing to be persuaded that there may be excuse (although they cannot conceive what,) for individual dereliction in such a palpable duty to the community. But none of them,—Benedicts or bachelors,—would consent to set a trap to diminish the population ; or tolerate any snares or devices in the Public Grounds, which would check their obvious tendency, as hitherto developed, to promote its increase.

The bed of the Oval Pool is so thickly sown with stone that it would bear up a loaded team. If need urges, or occasion should offer in the extreme drought of an arid Summer, the COMMISSION will not longer delay to give effect to their inclination; and, while confirming the texture of the bottom of the Diamond Pool, simultaneously remove every pretext for the slightest apprehension.

The construction of a Bridge was inevitable when the channel between the Pools had been fully opened. In anticipation of this need for them, cedar trees of adequate girth and length were engaged, during the season of easy sledding; and they were delivered, in due proportions, as wanted. The bridge, slightly changed from a rustic design in an English Horticultural Magazine, fairly fulfills its proper requirements. It was not calculated for swing or trapeze, and is confessedly a failure in those respects. Its appearance, although answering the expectations of the COMMISSION, seems to disappoint others who busy themselves in stripping off the coat of bark which the COMMISSION were at so much pains to procure unbruised. Such malignants will doubtless be suited with the glare of Venetian red that must succeed the neutral tint of nature. Similar ill fortune follows the cedar posts, by the employment of which it was hoped to exclude animals from invasion of the Foot Paths. Misuse of the jackknife is inveterate. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS applied, years since, for a grant of the Marriage-Fees that would ordinarily pass into the general treasury. But they never desired that any such concession to their needs or importunity should be supplemented with a supply of peeled rods, however useful they may have been found by the Hebrew Patriarch.\*

The *City Council* having determined that a new Water Main should be laid down along Park Avenue, and in Elm and Agricultural Streets, advantage was taken of the opportunity to establish a connection with the Water-System of ELM PARK. A suitable pipe was therefore deposited in a trench leading directly to the centre of the Diamond Pool, where the founda-

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\* *Genesis*: Chap. 31, v. 37-41.

tion for a Fountain had been bedded firmly, during the Autumn previous. The engineering was of the eye, as usual: but measurement could not have yielded more precise results. For the wash of the waves just covered the stone base; leaving only the casting for the fountain conspicuous, as was all along intended. The play of that Fountain is by no means as pretty as its picture—which sold it. It has, however, been essentially improved; and, with the wits intent upon its perfection, there need not be despair of its future. At any rate, a powerful head of water is available for that suitable Fountain which awaits its design and model at the hands of Worcester mechanism.

It was not known with certainty, until a few days since, that the ice could be so flushed with water as to keep it in good order for skating. Use of the Pools for that exhilarating and healthy exercise was a chief object of the COMMISSION in their construction. With the first severe frost of the Winter, hundreds of children flocked thither for cheerful sport. Interruption by sleet or snow storms was a disappointment to which the COMMISSION, reverting to their own youth, could not bear to see them subjected. Actual experiment has proved that water can be thrown over the whole surface of the Diamond Pool, in a brief space of time, and with a consumption of material infinitely less than is applied daily, throughout the Summer, by gentlemen destitute of meters, to sprinkle their sidewalks and Norway spruces. Whether it will be worth the while to maintain a smooth surface of ice upon these Pools is more uncertain; most likely not, until the rude and rough boy learns that the young ice must be suffered to form, and that, if he will persist in breaking it, he does so to his own loss.

In this matter of the introduction of water, from the public mains, and controlling its use, the COMMISSION have had the hearty co-operation and zealous interest of *Commissioner* Hall and his assistants in the Water Department; to whom they desire thus publicly to acknowledge the weight of obligation under which they have been placed.

The construction of an Islet, named *Shrub Islet*, had been partially accomplished, in the Northerly or Oval Pool, when work was suspended by the early frosts of 1876. The comple-

tion of this portion of their plan for the improvement of the PARK was one of the first things to engage attention after the vernal thaw. A broad channel was excavated, separating the proposed Islet from the main shore, easterly ; and the banks as high up as the contemplated water-line, were faced with a neat and durable pavement. The season continued so dry, throughout these operations, that it was resolved to take advantage of it to finish the design of the COMMISSION in its original and entire symmetry. Accordingly the excavation was prosecuted, by a reverse curve as it were, to the Bridge. Another Islet, named *Pine Islet*, was thereby obtained, lending a needed completeness and charm to both land and waterscape and materially enlarging the area of the Pool. The dirt to be gained, in this way, doubtless accelerated the conclusions of the COMMISSION who, having acres to raise to a suitable grade, could perceive more clearly the cubic yards in a mass of deposit. Besides which, alike from compulsion and choice, it has been the effort of the COMMISSION to execute their plans with the closest possible economy. Excavation for ponds was of obvious benefit, when the earth to be displaced was required elsewhere to fill a hollow or elevate a depression. It was all done with the aid of the same manual labor that was indispensable for ordinary tasks ; the employment of a team having only been required for the casual necessities of ploughing or of drawing stones wherewith to face the banks. The COMMISSION have continued fortunate in their old and tried servants ; industry and fidelity uniting to commend them, and to assure the City that it is getting full return for its wages.

The COMMISSION have always desired, in the interest of the People, to enlarge the area of the Public Grounds by every legitimate means. Latterly, it seemed to them that if Agricultural Street had sufficed for public travel and the accommodation of the Annual Cattle Show, throughout a natural age, there might well be reclamation, to a slight extent, in behalf of popular enjoyment as well as to vindicate those major rights that are too often supposed to be surrendered with the original concession of a privilege. For Sever Street bordered the Agricultural Grounds, during their entire length, to a width of Fifty

(50) feet. And our noble Park Avenue; against which fewer of a short-sighted generation rail and gnash their teeth than were wont for a while, supplied another thoroughfare; in regard to the absurd and superfluous amplitude and capacity whereof Agricultural dignitaries and martial magnates, at a recent term of Court, could not adequately express their disgust. The need of Two Hundred and Ten (210) feet in width, of streets, was not so obviously imperative as to defy a moderate reduction. This COMMISSION had entertained the opinion that Agricultural Street was never laid out in greater breadth than Forty (40) feet. They were encouraged in this belief by a late official, whose memory retained no trace of a decree which was adopted long prior to the commencement of his useful career. Finding that they were in error; and that they had no right to comply with the numerous petitions wherein they were asked to prevent the passage of teams over the western sidewalk of that street, thereby destroying the sod and annoying pedestrians, it was thought best to lay the matter before the *City Council*, which was accordingly done in manner and form, to wit:—

SEPTEMBER, 17, A. D. 1877.

*To the Honorable City Council:—*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would respectfully represent to your *Honorable Bodies* that ELM PARK, as originally acquired and possessed by the City, was bounded upon its East side by a Street (called "Agricultural") Forty (40) feet wide: that thereafter, to wit, upon the 29th day of May, A. D. 1854, the City Council did, upon the Petition of the Trustees of the Worcester Agricultural Society, (there being no objection), adjudge and determine that it would be expedient to widen said Agricultural Street to a breadth of Eighty (80) feet: since which it has so remained:—

And the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would further represent to the *Honorable Council* that the fence, upon the east side of said ELM PARK, has decayed and become exceedingly dilapidated: that materials for the construction of a new one have been gradually accumulated: that, in the opinion of the COMMISSION, it is for the benefit of all concerned that any new Fence should be set more to the Eastward, thereby restoring to the PARK the Mall, and the row of Elm trees, which are now subject to constant injury:—

Wherefore the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would respectfully petition the *Honorable Council* (or more especially the Mayor and Aldermen), to set off Twenty (20) feet from the Westerly side of said Agricultural Street, for its entire length, assigning and restoring the same to ELM PARK.

And the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would further represent and set forth that, within a very few years, to wit, upon the 27th day of December, A. D. 1870, Sever Street was established, by the City Council, of a uniform width of Fifty (50) feet; and that thus, should the Petition of the Commission be granted, there would still remain for the convenience of the Agricultural Society a width, in Streets, of



One Hundred and Ten (110) feet against the Forty (40) which sufficed for said Society when its original purchase of land was concluded:—

And the Commission of Public Grounds would further and finally represent that, by the action herein asked of the Honorable Council, a positive benefit and improvement will inure to the City, without expense or injury to any one.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

This Petition was referred in concurrence to the Committee on Highways. The Chairman of the COMMISSION, as opportunity served, endeavored to impress his own views upon the Members of that Committee, as well as upon those Aldermen and Councilmen whom he chanced to meet. All with whom he conversed appeared to concede the reasonableness of the request, admitting that there could be no possible objection to it, in the interest of the City, which retained its entire proprietary rights in any event. Still, nothing was heard officially from the Highway Committee, indicating a wish to meet the Commission upon the ground or elsewhere; while the season for out-door work was rapidly wearing away. At last, a fortnight having expired fruitlessly, the Chairman was casually informed, by the Chairman of the Committee on the part of the *Council*, that the COMMISSION would have "leave to withdraw." The Alderman at the head of the Joint Committee was at once sought; and that gentleman confirmed the statement of the Councilman from Ward Eight, adding that the Committee would Report to that effect, the same evening. Possessed of this fact, there was left but one course for the Chairman to pursue. He accordingly transmitted the subjoined note to Alderman Dickinson, and inserts it here for a clearer intelligence of the whole affair:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, )  
Worcester, Massachusetts, October 1, A. D. 1877, )

*To the Honorable City Council:—*

The undersigned, Chairman of the Commission of Public Grounds, is informed by the Chairman of the Highway Committee that "Leave to Withdraw" is to be reported upon his Petition that Twenty (20) feet of Agricultural Street may be set off from said Street and restored to Elm Park.

The Petition of the undersigned simply asked that Twenty (20) feet of land might hereafter be upon the West, instead of upon the East, side of a fence.

He does not believe that there can be found any opponents of his Petition, unless it



may be in the ranks of those chronic grumblers, the measure of whose discontent is usually meted by the sum of benefit that the march of improvement has heaped upon them.

He has no desire to fall in respect for the Honorable Council or any of its Committees. But believing that such a peremptory decision, reached without a hearing or an official view, carries with it an intimation not to be overlooked that he no longer possesses the confidence of the City Government, he respectfully tenders his resignation as a Commissioner of Public Grounds.

(Signed),

EDWARD W. LINCOLN.

That note is recited here, because its substance has been made public, although its presentation to the *Honorable Council* was plainly conditioned upon the expected reception and ratification of a certain Report from the Highway Committee. It was laid upon the table, accompanied by expressions of opinion that are gratefully appreciated. Nothing was heard, however, from the Highway Committee, until the 15th' of October, when the *Council* adopted a recommendation from it that the COMMISSION be granted a "Hearing." At a day shortly subsequent, the Chairman of the COMMISSION was notified that *His Honor* the Mayor would be pleased to converse with him upon the subject matter of his petition. That interview, agreeable as one held with *His Honor* must necessarily be, resulted in the following communication addressed to the Mayor and through him to the Committee on Highways:—

COMMISSION PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Massachusetts, October 20th, A. D. 1877. }

TO HIS HONOR MAYOR PRATT.

*Dear Sir.*—Since our conversation of this M, I have reflected upon the matter spoken of and beg leave to state to you and (through you) to the Highway Committee,

1st. That I see no reasonable objection to my original request for the re-annexation of Twenty (20) feet of land, taken from Agricultural Street, to Elm Park.

2d. That if, from some inscrutable cause, foreign or of kin to me, the Highway Committee should feel precluded from reporting in favor of granting that request; and only on that account; then

3d. That the City consent to the actual control of said Twenty (20) feet of land, by the Commission of Public Grounds, without interference; to the end that said Commission may take steps for its protection from intrusion by animals, and its safer enjoyment as a walk by women and children.

4th. That the Highway Department, either by plowing out the western gutter or the deposit of street scrapings, cover the roots of the elms which are seriously exposed; and the Commission of Public Grounds advise that a drain be constructed, to conduct the surface water from Agricultural Street, said drain following the ancient water course northward of the Oak copse and entering the North (Oval) pool in Elm Park. That Agricultural Street needs surface drainage, perhaps more than any other

in the city, must be well known to the Highway Committee. And the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, seeking only to promote the public interest, will cheerfully consent to let such surface drain enter the North (Oval) Pool.

5th. It being understood that winter threatens, and that, in this climate, whatever is to be done out-doors should not be procrastinated.

Repeating however his fixed opinion that the simplest solution of the matter would be a concession of the original Petition for Twenty (20) feet of land, the Chairman of the COMMISSION respectfully verifies this summary of alternative conclusions by his signature.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman of the Commission of Public Grounds.*

Upon the 29th of October following, the whole matter was settled (for the present) by the action of the *City Council*, as follows:—

#### CITY OF WORCESTER.

In City Council, Oct. 29, 1877.

*Ordered*, That the COMMISSION OF (Shade Trees and) PUBLIC GROUNDS be, and they hereby are authorized to set such posts as are necessary to keep the sidewalks on the Westerly side of Agricultural Street exclusively for the use of pedestrians.

Approved October 30, 1877.

CHARLES B. PRATT, *Mayor*.

Which was perhaps better than nothing, being the utmost that could then be obtained. People who are curious to learn, in the classic phrase of John Van Buren, whose “dad was under that load of hay,” must search for themselves. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS carry only that lantern whereof Diogenes filed the caveat, whose light is no aid to detection in such cases.

Something may be interpolated for the comfort of those who care not for ornamental water, and to whom the ice that delighted their juniors represents but a snare for the unwary. In some future conflagration, threatening to consume the dense settlement that will then environ Elm Park, safety may be found in the Pools which are completed, or just commenced at this time of writing. What appears a mere extravagance to some, who would have the land level because the head is flat, may be regarded as the ready safeguard—*tutamen ac decus*—of an entire neighborhood. A very creditable attempt at the extinguishment of fire may be made with some three million

gallons of water which the COMMISSION anticipate for their store during an average season. They feel very confident that their hopes are not too sanguine, and that their fullest expectations will be realized; in which event they can experience the singular satisfaction of tickling the optic while soothing the pocket nerve.

The COMMISSION have claimed and exercised a right of planting out in the *Park* such shrubs and plants as they could or were inclined to spare, and which would at the same time be of lasting ornament. Their associate, Mr. Hadwen, has continued a generous benefactor, as sight and scent will both confess when his *Syringas* get settled in their new home. The *Phloxes* of Mr. Salisbury were pleasantly conspicuous as well from their persistent as profuse flowering. The Chairman will not enlarge upon the *Geraniums* wherewith he crowned the summit of an artificial mound, as has been his annual custom. But he would beg, as a favor to himself and the COMMISSION, that those who wait each Spring, for his vernal bedding-out of *Geraniums* wherefrom to stock their private door-yards, would apply to him in advance and accept a free-will dole as a substitute for a forced levy. They would be recipients of two benefits in this way: getting their plants in pots at first hands, and, although feeling mean enough, escaping their customary sensation of a sneak-thief. In May, A. D., 1877, plants were set out in the *Park* at sundown, which the next morning were missing.

The COMMISSION believe that many shrubs and plants would be given to the City, by gentlemen who alter their grounds, were it known that such gifts would be acceptable. They gladly acknowledge a present of roots of the *Bocconia Japonica* from Hon. George W. Richardson, and shall recognize with equal pleasure, similar appreciation of their necessities by any other of their fellow-citizens. People are very apt to overstock their premises; and when the time arrives for the inevitable thinning-out, being at a loss for any other disposition of the surplus, it is consigned to the brush-heap. Many ornamental shrubs are destroyed yearly, for no other reason than that they have outgrown the space which can be spared for them. Some such might be too large to warrant their transfer to *Elm Park*

with a reasonable hope of their survival. But many would doubtless succeed; and for the gift of them the COMMISSION will be grateful.

Professor C. S. Sargent, Director of the *Botanic Garden* and of the *Arnold Arboretum*, connected with the university at Cambridge, has again placed the COMMISSION under a pleasant sense of obligation. For even an obligation can be pleasant, instead of onerous, when it is conferred with a manifest and thorough cordiality. In order to their permanent record, the names and number of the shrubs for which we are indebted to Professor Sargent, are recited in full:

4 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> .	1 <i>Crataegus coccinea</i> .
2 <i>Rhamnus frangula</i> .	1 <i>Berberis</i> .
1 <i>Spiræa salicifolia</i> .	2 <i>Berberis petolaris</i> .
2 <i>Staphylia trifoliata</i> .	1 <i>Philadelphus coronarius</i> .
2 <i>Corylus Americana</i> .	4 <i>Alnus nigra</i> .
1 <i>Sambucus pubens</i> .	3 <i>Ptelea trifoliata</i> .
2 <i>Alnus Oxycanthafolia</i> .	2 <i>Sabina</i> .
1 <i>Ulmus (cork-barked.)</i>	3 <i>Alnus Oregonia</i> .

Besides several, the inscription upon whose tags was so thoroughly effaced as to be illegible. Nearly all of these shrubs are now planted in the positions where they are intended to remain.

In their last Report, the COMMISSION referred to the gift, by Prof. Sargent, of a specimen of Menzies' Spruce (*Abies Menziesii*) and to the bleak exposure to which it had been deliberately subjected. They are glad to state that it endured the test, unharmed. It has, however, made so little growth, that a more genial and conspicuous location will be provided for it, where it may develop into its true proportions.

As the trees and shrubs, heretofore planted in *Elm Park*, by the COMMISSION, gaining root-hold, begin to grow strong and tall, it is interesting to notice the adaptation of differing forms of vegetation to the conditions in which they find themselves. While some plants suffer from excess of moisture, (in frequent instances those suffering most to which water is assumed to be

an absolute necessity of existence), others pine and wither in a gravelly upland that is as thirsty as the proverbial fish. But man must be master: and not the plants which he has subjected to his training, and wherewith he would consummate his plans for the artificial adornment of the grounds committed to his charge. Properly fed or stimulated, the *Arbor Vitæ*, which had drooped beneath the keen blasts and exposure of Winter and Spring, felt new life in its veins and manifested a palpable resuscitation. The Hemlock Spruce (*Abies Canadensis*), perhaps as difficult a tree to transplant successfully as any that can be named, has been rescued from the very jaws of death. Indeed, so many varieties of vegetable growth have evinced an almost imperishable vitality, that the COMMISSION feel increasing reluctance to relinquish hope of a specimen, however forlorn its present appearance. Would the *City Council* but give practical effect to the kind wishes whereof it is so lavish, (and of their sincerity the COMMISSION would not be understood to imply the faintest doubt,) much could be accomplished that is but fondly dreamed of at present. Merely by the liberal application of the scrapings from the Highways, barrenness might be converted into fertility, and the waste places caused to attract by their blended beauty and fragrance. By using that material, all the filling absolutely required for *Elm Park* could be obtained in one or two seasons at most. The portions of that PUBLIC GROUND that are in chiefest need of grading up to level or slope, whether for appearance or surface drainage, are blessed with a soil the poverty of which cannot be exaggerated. All that has ever been effected towards its reclamation has been simply to convert it from a swamp into hard land. A few inches of poor loam cover it, but the shallowest plowing turns up coarse gravel, beneath which in many spots are found almost impenetrable deposits of bog iron-ore. What the COMMISSION require is quantity rather than quality: and this, if nothing else, the Highways might supply. Some may think, undoubtedly, that the vast heaps of peat, thrown out in the process of excavating the Pools, should suffice for every want of the kind. But experience has shown that such material lacks substance; and that the mass which averages a foot in depth will crumble

to less than the thickness of an inch, disintegrating under the influence of frost and thaw to an almost impalpable powder. Other matter would help in fixing it; as it were; and the combination, operated upon by the chemistry of Nature, might be trusted to consolidate into a homogeneous and fertile soil. Nothing can be found so cheap and handy for this purpose as the scrapings from the streets. For it resolves itself, after all, into a question merely of carting that dirt for a greater or less distance. It is already loaded: shall it be hauled to the *Park*, which is suffering for very lack of it, and whither this COMMISSION only ask that it may be drawn for one or two seasons? Or dumped into some of the vacant lots upon Piedmont Street, because access thereto is easier and shorter. It was delivered in the *Park*, at whatever point the Chairman indicated, for years in succession; although in frequent instances to the manifest peril of the teams. Now that the ground is made secure for the passage of loaded carts, the loads are withheld. The land belongs to the whole community, for nothing less than which would the COMMISSION so concern themselves in and out of season, rain or shine. Its enjoyment, under restrictions few in number, and those only tending to promote the general welfare, is free as air and would be practically illimitable, were scope given to the acquisitiveness of the COMMISSION. For such ampler "room and marge," however, patience will have finished its perfect work, when the results of the last civic survey for new resources of water shall coincide with all the later and better conclusions from actual exploration. The rills that trickle clear and ice-cold, from the slopes of Asnebumskit, blending with the current rivulets from Holden, do not more certainly indicate a perennial supply for the future multitudes of Worcester than does that eminence, confronting *Elm Park*, to whose symmetry and curious similarity of altitude to that of other prominent summits, attention has been directed so frequently in these Reports, designate the site of a Reservoir and complete the landscape. That we can deprive ourselves of much of this; be content with far less; or abstain from the whole; proves naught in this connection. What does concern is that this COMMISSION prefer to utilize their talent, in their own day and generation,

instead of burying it in the ground where it can neither profit nor accumulate. They would make the most of the trust confided to them, because they have faith that somewhat may be accomplished for the enjoyment of all classes of the community. They desire to extend the free use and luxury of air and earth and water to every one: if to any more than others,—to those whose lines were never cast in pleasant places, and to whom grime and ceaseless toil have heretofore appeared a dreary epitome of life. For such more especially would they sow and reap. To them, on sparse holidays and Christian (*not* Puritan) Sundays, the green bank and rippling water; the unwonted lawn and fragrant copse. All this can be realized at slight cost, visionary as it may seem to Gradgrind.

et id genus omne,

allowing, as they do, three per cent. on call, if the comparative waste of the municipality can but be garnered up and bestowed upon the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

“And other fell upon good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold.”

The ground may not be so good as that of yore, in Palestine, but it is susceptible of improvement, and the return would be usurious, if not to the extreme of Jewry.

It has been a pleasure to the COMMISSION, an expression of which we cannot withhold, to notice evidences everywhere throughout the suburbs of the city, that their instruction has not been in vain. The whole landscape is in the process of improvement. Necessity has compelled the clearing of brush and swamp land; for no real estate is so poor as to be neglected by the assessor. Alders and birches are grubbed up to make room for tillage; and thrift, if slowly, supplants shiftlessness and want. Upon many highways leading to the city, where stone walls have had to be rebuilt, they have been withdrawn to the lines of the County Commissioners, thereby widening the way for travel and beautifying its aspect. In many instances, such walls have been sunk, so as to bring the surface of the land contained within them upon a level with their top; an achievement, where possible, of superior charm and utility.



Trees have been felled along many roads, under the spur of an avarice that takes no thought for the morrow, valuing the stateliest pine or hickory but for the feet of marketable wood which it could be made to yield. But such cases were exceptional; for, oftener far, have young trees been left at suitable intervals, or transplanted, if occasion required. Frequently where the axe has been put in requisition, was great judgment shown in retaining the most promising; the *abettor* thereby providing for future shade and the permanent adornment of the highway. And yet there are those who are insensible to such things, and who cannot appreciate the advantages to a city of being situated in the heart of an Eden instead of a Sahara. To such may be commended the words of John B. Moore, of Concord, a recent Chairman of the *Committee on Agriculture* in the *General Court*, and a gentleman whose keen sense of natural beauty by no means dulls his utilitarian perceptions. Introducing the Country meeting of the *State Board of Agriculture*, at Waltham, on the 4th of December, ult., he thus proceeded:—

“And now allow me to say a few words about the town of Waltham, which, as many of you know, is located in the immediate vicinity of the great market garden interest of the State. A ride of ten miles in almost any direction from where we now are, would take you through a section of country in which you would find farms, market gardens with the usual appliances of hot beds and forcing houses, florists with their green houses, suburban residences, many of them with beautiful and extensive pleasure grounds, adding not only beauty and variety to the landscape, but an actual cash value to the farms and gardens in their immediate vicinity; for it is well understood that the better the surroundings, the more valuable becomes the neighboring property.”

Observe, also, the language of Rev. Benton Smith, President of the *Waltham Farmers' Club*, in his address of welcome to the State Board:—

“Nature was lavish in giving charms to Waltham, for we have mountain and plain, and hill and river combined in one beautiful landscape. Its natural beauty has long made Waltham an attractive place of residence to men of fortune. They purchased large tracts of land, brought it into a high state of cultivation, procured the best stock, improved the roads and planted shade trees beside them, and utilized the brooks to adorn their estates, without changing the agricultural character or appearance of the town, and added new beauty to the natural attractions of the place.

“Good roads are necessary to the prosperity of any place. And the excellence of our roads and the mode of caring for them have been commended in town, State, and national reports.”



And which of all those rural charms is lacking to Worcester? We need but raise our eyes, and, lo! "so near, and yet so far," as you turn to Asnebumskit or Wachusett, the mountain! A brief ride or a brisk walk brings us to a Lake that challenges rivalry. If our rivers, indeed, are small, we are less in peril of freshets; and small as they are, they never fail in the sheen and sparkle of perennial freshness. And finally, as to the last detail in the comparison, what municipality throughout the Commonwealth can more truthfully exclaim: "Mine are the cattle upon a thousand hills!" Yet these are the work of Nature, in her profuse beneficence. In contrast, how shall man boast himself of that which he hath wrought, with infinite pains-taking, and grudging every cent! The bounty of Nature is upon a scale so magnificent that it seems to paralyze imitation. Or else our parsimony, which refuses to avail itself of obvious methods of developing and improving the natural beauties that encompass us, falls back for justification of its meanness, in sheer despair, upon its innate incapability of appreciation. This COMMISSION will not repeat their epistle to the unconverted. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" may continue the motto for a weak brain and timid heart. They reiterate their convictions of old, that men must be the architects of their own fortunes; and that the foundation should be laid deep and broad if they would not have the superstructure topple. Ill fares the city whose streets are suffered to get out of repair; whose school-yards are left a waste; whose Commons are unimproved; and all for the sake of a fancied economy. Depreciation alone more than equals the apparent saving. And for one that is retained among us by such a policy, that takes no thought for the morrow,—what multitudes are repelled! What impressions of Worcester must be gathered by the visitors to the State Lunatic Hospital, (*not chronic*), as they are borne, in official consequence and complacency, over the blackness and bleakness of Shrewsbury Street? How can they sufficiently admire that solid dump,—yclept causeway,—that ruins as lovely a sheet of water as was ever set in a landscape—its chiefest charm! As for ourselves,—why we had to maintain a crossing in some form; and were glad to build a

permanent one, with wages at but fifty cents. Perhaps it would augment or restore the attraction of the Lake, were it spanned by a continuous series of arches. But you cannot expend the dollar of the fathers and retain the feeling of it,—in a close fist. No! let us not await the methodical action of the Assessors; there is a quicker way to reduce our valuation. The COMMISSION are not aware how it is rendered in the vulgate; but some creditable versions characterize it as wrapping your talent in a napkin and thereafter burying it.

All which is Respectfully Submitted by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, January 28th,*

*A. D., 1878.*

B Y - L A W S  
OF THE  
Commission of Public Grounds,  
OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.

---

1. No person shall be suffered to affix, in any manner whatsoever, advertisements, handbills, placards, posters, or written or printed notices, to any of the Shade Trees of the City.

2. All persons are hereby forbidden —

To place any erection or obstruction on the Commons or Parks of the City.

To catch, trap or shoot Birds or take Birds' nests.

To injure, damage, destroy or dig up any turf, shrubs, trees or plants, or break up or destroy the surface of the Commons, or light any fire upon them.

To invade the lawns, or to trample down and destroy the grass of such lawns, either of the Common or Elm Park.

To deposit any rubbish, manure, cinders, road sweepings, bricks, timber, building materials, or other substances, upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or in any pond or basin of a fountain in said Commons or Parks, or in any manner to fill up, defile, or pollute the same.

To place any carriage, cart, or other vehicle upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or upon the foot-paths over the same.

To fire any gun or other fire-arm (except of the Militia of the Commonwealth), or throw any stick, stone, or other missile.

Or generally, to act in a disorderly manner, or to commit any nuisance, or do any act tending to disfigure or injure the Commons or Parks, or annoy or hurt any person frequenting them for the purpose of exercise, recreation, or transit. .

Under penalty of Five Dollars (\$5.00) for each offence, to be paid to the person whose testimony shall secure a conviction.

**CITY CHARTER—Section 21.**

\* \* \* \* And said Board may make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust, not inconsistent with this Act and the Laws of the Commonwealth, as they shall deem expedient.

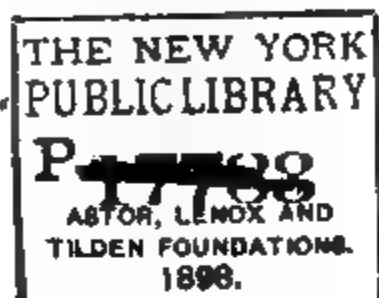
*March 4, 1874.*

حکومت شهر - زمین

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# Report of the Commission

OF



# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

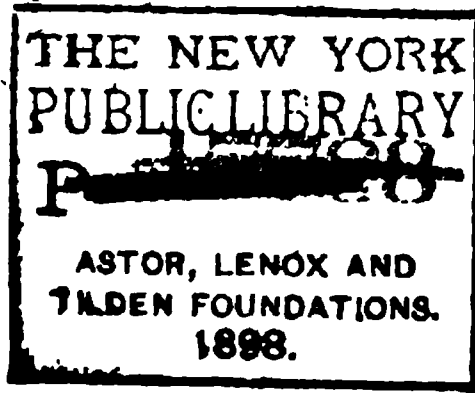
CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1878.

WORCESTER:  
PRESS OF NOYES, SNOW & CO.,  
47 MAIN STREET.

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Report of the Commission

OF

PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1878.

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WORCESTER:  
PRESS OF NOYES, SNOW & CO.,  
47 MAIN STREET.





# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL:*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS derive no such pleasure from the preparation of a Report, as to induce them to lengthen it needlessly; nor have they so little regard for economy as to contrive a job for the printer, without occasion. There is but a single opportunity to explain their operations, throughout the year; and, with due respect for their fellow citizens, that explanation, when rendered, should be intelligible and explicit. Their opinions may not be worth so much as they think: nevertheless they throw light upon their actions. And the Twenty-First Section of the Municipal Charter is imperative in its exaction of a "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and in said streets and highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same," in the month of January; wherefore such is now submitted, in all frankness and respect.

*City of Worcester*

*In account with*

THE COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

	Dr.	
To Appropriation for current year,	.	\$4,000 00
Receipts,	.	289 34

<i>Per Contra,</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
<i>January:</i>	
Kinnicutt & Co., 6 extra canal barrows, &c., &c., &c., . . . . .	\$20 25
S. F. Shattuck, pruning, . . . . .	4 35
<i>February:</i>	
Kinnicutt & Co., hose and sprinkler, . . . . .	6 50
George G. Hildreth, 6 trees, cor. Oread and Beacon, . . . . .	6 00
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	11 78
<i>March:</i>	
G. H. Walker, map of City, . . . . .	10 00
Kinnicutt & Co., measuring line, (150 ft) . . . . .	75
J. S. Clark & Son, 2 bbls. cement, . . . . .	3 00
Steven Rowe, labor on paths of Common, . . . . .	20 98
<i>April:</i>	
City Engineer, establishing grade for gutters (Common), . . . . .	9 25
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	27 12
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	40 25
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	22 50
Patrick Whalon, labor, . . . . .	18 13
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, 1 peck, . . . . .	1 00
C. H. Perry, trimming trees, . . . . .	9 20
Kinnicutt & Co., tools and bronzing fountain, . . . . .	5 25
B. C. Jaques, labor and stock for tree guards, . . . . .	58 20
<i>May :</i>	
John O'Connor, laying 455 4-10 yards of paving on Common, . . . . .	227 70
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	33 75
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	41 12
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 00
Patrick Whalon, labor, . . . . .	35 25
Noyes & Snow, printing report and by-laws, . . . . .	45 70
George T. Sutton, work on pump in Common, . . . . .	4 83
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, &c. . . . .	9 15
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	1 38
Engineer's Dept., gutters to Common (G. H. P.), . . . . .	2 50
"    "    "    "    (J. H. H.), . . . . .	3 75
Putnam & Davis, . . . . .	30
C. F. Henry, teaming, . . . . .	3 25
H. S. Pike, 400 yards of earth, at 25c, . . . . .	100 00
Brooks & Wheeler, manure and teaming, . . . . .	144 38
Highway Dept., earth to Elm Park and sand to Common, . . . . .	127 75
W. G. Ruggles, 2 maples, (West street), . . . . .	2 00
Kinnicutt & Co., gravel screen, . . . . .	14 00
O. B. Hadwen, shrubs, trees, and planting some, . . . . .	138 50
<i>June :</i>	
G. H. Palmer, setting stakes for street trees, . . . . .	2 00
F. H. McClure, " " " " . . . . .	2 63
J. H. Howell, " " " " , , , , . . . . .	3 43

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

H. A. Lange, plants, . . . . .	\$4 00
John Dempsey, labor, . . . . .	7 50
B. C. Jaques, labor and stock, . . . . .	4 93
J. B. O'Leary, mending tools, . . . . .	3 35
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	10 61
Committee on Lamps, pt., re-location of lamps on Common, . . . . .	50 00
O. B. Hadwen, trees and planting, . . . . .	83 75
Dexter Rice, signs, . . . . .	28 00
Patrick Smith, loam and labor, . . . . .	95 57
Wm. McGrath, teams and labor, . . . . .	81 00
Patrick Gormley, trees on Vernon st., and setting, . . . . .	65 00
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, . . . . .	26 05
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	38 25
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	44 62
Patrick Whalon, labor, . . . . .	36 75
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	45 50
Highway Dept., scrapings, gravel and hard-pan, . . . . .	98 75
D. M. Woodward, stone and labor in setting ("Parade"), . . . . .	80 25
John O'Connor, paving and patching, . . . . .	25 67

## July:

H. S. Pike, earth, labor and teams, . . . . .	118 50
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	42 87
Patrick Whalon, labor, . . . . .	34 88
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	37 50
Steven Rowe, . . . . .	43 75
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, . . . . .	3 14
Kinnicutt & Co., tools and wire net, . . . . .	8 33
E. B. Crane & Co., spruce plank, . . . . .	5 00

## August:

J. B. O'Leary, (blacksmithing), . . . . .	91
E. R. Fiske, 200 postal cards and caption, . . . . .	3 00
Patrick Smith, loam, . . . . .	6 00
J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, . . . . .	2 75
A. L. Rice, maples on Hawthorn street, . . . . .	5 00
George T. Sutton, work on pumps, &c., . . . . .	17 45
Benj. C. Jaques, stock and labor, . . . . .	20 42
Wm. McGrath, earth and labor, . . . . .	82 75
H. S. Pike, gravel and teams, . . . . .	54 00
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, &c., . . . . .	12 14
Webb, driving wells, . . . . .	37 75
John Dempsey, labor, . . . . .	8 62
David Rowe, labor, . . . . .	38 50
Steven Rowe, labor, . . . . .	43 75
Patrick Whalon, labor, . . . . .	37 50
Michael Kennedy, labor, . . . . .	35 25

## September:

G. D. Webb, earth, . . . . .	180 75
Dexter Rice, 5 signs, . . . . .	5 50
Charles Belcher, water fowl, . . . . .	10 00
Kinnicutt & Co., tools, . . . . .	7 67

J. & J. A. Rice, grass seed, &c.,	\$20 53
S. F. Shattuck, pruning,	6 70
Patrick Whalon, labor,	40 50
Michael Kennedy, labor,	34 50
Steven Rowe, labor,	47 25
David Rowe, labor,	45 50
George H. Estabrook, freight, &c.,	2 50

*October:*

Auditor, ink,	42
George T. Sutton, plumbing,	4 75
Webb, earth,	53 50
Highway Dept., scrapings,	25 00
John Dempsey, labor,	9 75
Kinnicutt & Co., tools,	3 30
Steven Rowe, labor,	45 55
David Rowe, labor,	43 75
Michael Kennedy, labor,	37 50
Patrick Whalon, labor,	37 50
Benj. C. Jaques, labor,	14 01

*November:*

W. & N. R. R., 1788 feet hard pine,	53 64
H. S. Pike, teams and labor,	18 25
Kinnicutt & Co., shovels, &c.,	4 63
Webb, team and labor,	7 25
J. B. O'Leary, blacksmithing,	1 84
S. F. Shattuck, pruning,	7 65
Michael Kennedy, labor,	39 00
Patrick Whalon, labor,	39 00
David Rowe, labor,	45 06
Steven Rowe, labor,	45 50

*December:*

J. & J. A. Rice, tools,	1 00
Kinnicutt & Co., tools,	80
Patrick Whalon, labor,	34 50
David Rowe, labor,	39 37
Steven Rowe, labor,	38 50
Michael Kennedy, labor,	33 00
C. F. Henry, manure and teaming,	89 50
H. C. Fish, iron work (bridge),	40 20
B. C. Jaques, lumber, labor, and painting (bridge),	253 63
O. B. Hadwen, shrubs, trees, and setting,	31 00

The work of the COMMISSION, upon the *Common*, throughout the last year, was seen of men. So much of it as may be found unmarred, by recklessness or malice, will be disclosed once more after the melting of the winter snows. Mainly,—the huge trench that intercepted passage in almost every direction; and

which had been tolerably filled, in the late Autumn, immediately upon the removal of the railway-tracks; was brought up to grade in an effectual and thorough manner. Absolutely mixed by passing through a screen, pulverized brick, gravel, and broken hard-pan, combined to form a base upon which it was deemed safe to risk the heaviest battalions. The completeness of the test to which the work was subjected will be better appreciated by the future historian, from the subjoined correspondence, which is therefore placed upon record:

COL. W. S. B. HOPKINS,  
*Captain Commanding Worcester Continentals.* }

*My Dear Sir:*—The work of improvement upon the Common purposed to itself for accomplishment by this Commission, is now so near completion that I feel sure of incurring no extreme risk in inviting the Continentals, (through yourself their commander) to make use of that old-time "Training Field" on Wednesday next.

The mall that has just been constructed may not come amiss for march or review; nor would it conflict with the views of this Commission, should its original use, by the Continentals, serve to render permanent some such name as THE "PARADE" for that ample space.

Very Truly,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Chairman.

Commission of Public Grounds, Worcester, May 23, 1877.

*Edward W. Lincoln, Esq., Chairman Commission of Public Grounds:—*

*My Dear Sir:*—I have the honor to accept with pleasure your offer of the use of the Common for the dress parade and review of my command on the 29th inst.

The Continentals will be proud of the honor your Commission confers on them by the permission to dedicate the new mall of the old "training field," as "THE PARADE," and will endeavor to present an appearance creditable at once to the city and the field on which they muster.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

W. S. B. HOPKINS, Captain.

Headquarters Worcester Continentals, May 24, 1878.

That baptism was effectual and will remain indelible forever.

That the labors of the COMMISSION are appreciated, (possibly viewed with too partial eyes,) has been sometimes made apparent elsewhere than in the Addresses of His Honor the Mayor. While engaged in constructing the PARADE, and finishing the grading essential to its neat appearance and convenience of access, a letter was received from Thomas H. Dodge, Esq., of

such nature that it is incorporated with this Report in connection with the reply that it elicited. Many of the "acts and doings" of the COMMISSION have no other record than current correspondence. It would work injustice, at times, were they suffered to sink into utter oblivion; their rescue from which would seem to be a most useful purpose of an Annual Report.

APRIL 1ST, 1878.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Esq.,

*Chairman of Commission of Public Grounds.*

*My Dear Sir:*—As a citizen of Worcester, allow me to thank you for your constant and unwearied efforts to improve and beautify the streets, and Public Parks and grounds of the "Heart" of the good old Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If your efforts had been sustained and aided in the past, by previous City Governments, as they deserved, Worcester, to-day, would be as noted for the beauty of its streets and Public Grounds, as she is for the general intelligence and business enterprise and activity of her citizens.

Let this pass however, for the present, while I call your attention to another matter, viz: A cross or diagonal walk from the north-east corner of the central Common, to Park street, at or near the head of Portland street. I notice, to day, that you are making arrangements to close the passage-way opposite my block, which was originally opened at my expense to accommodate the public, and obviate the necessity of crossing two streets in passing from the Common to the east side of Portland street. I am aware that you entered an objection, at the time, based upon the ground that it would have a tendency to tempt people to cross the park at a point where there was no walk provided; and present appearances indicate quite clearly that you were correct in your predictions.

By this note I simply wish to make an appeal in behalf of the public, and particularly in the interests of women and children, for a walk crossing the Common as indicated above. It would be a great convenience, especially in wet and stormy weather, also when passing to and from the Union Station. I am aware that the means placed at your disposal, as a public officer, are limited,—*too limited*, and with a view of increasing the same, and as a contribution to and for the public good, I enclose herewith my check for twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), and trust you will not only countermand the order to close the passage-way above referred to, but will listen to my appeal on behalf of citizens, as well as strangers, and lay out a walk as requested.

(Signed),      Very truly yours,

THOS. H. DODGE.

Which elicited the following reply:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Massachusetts, April 3, A. D. 1878. }

THOMAS H. DODGE, Esq.:—

*My Dear Sir.*—Your note of the 1st inst., with inclosure, was duly received and would have been answered sooner but for the fact that my private affairs sometimes exact, nor will be denied, a portion of my attention and time.

Your just appreciation of their efforts for the development and ornamentation of Worcester will be grateful to this COMMISSION. Much that is done makes but little show at the instant; and impatience is often provoked and expressed because of the apparent slight return for labor and means expended. But the bread cast upon the waters is not lost. From the seeming chaos emerge pathways and lawns; and from the young or sparse plantation grow up welcome bloom and foliage. And such culture *pays*! now, as in all time. It was Athens,—neither Sparta nor Thebes,—that attracted all which was best and worthiest in Greece; crowding her schools, enriching her marts; and all because she arrayed herself like a queen in her beauty. So was it with Florence, during the Middle Ages; and such is pre-eminently the case, at present, with Paris. What but avarice and ill-governed desires prevent a restoration of the primeval garden? You and I, in common with our fellow-citizens, are offered the election between God and mammon. To promote a healthy vitality in the body politic, we are advised to throttle the breathing, check the circulation,—numb the heart!

In these latter days, the administration of States and Cities is sadly contingent upon what may be styled the politics of usury. Appropriations are granted, or withheld, as there is greater or less success in gathering a harvest from reckless discount. Honest men,—who ought to breathe freer,—suffer themselves to be panic-stricken by the frauds of stock and note gamblers. Under such circumstances, and at such times, what chance for a just estimate have measures that appeal only to the nobler feelings! Whose support must be sought and attracted from a level head and a correct taste?

Take a single instance; had heed been allowed to the timely suggestions of this COMMISSION, the travel and traffic of Quinsigamond and Millbury would not now be subjected to such continual annoyance and loss; but, passing around the base of Mt. St. James, have found, in the prolongation of Hope Avenue and the embankment of Kettle Brook, both a public convenience and ornament. To the narrow minds of some, the far-sighted are ever visionary. He is the actual spendthrift who neglects or wastes opportunity instead of seizing upon and improving it. But the imperative necessities of the immediate future can be trusted to vindicate that prevision which would anticipate them at the least cost and trouble.

A broad and continuous AVENUE will, sooner or later, environ Worcester. And whether it is completed in their day, or after they shall have been gathered to their fathers, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS will ask neither better, nor more enduring monument to their memory.

But I am suffering myself to be carried away by a too attractive theme. "Reverting to our lambs," I have been forced to the conclusion, with what reluctance you can imagine, that a pathway from Portland street, diagonally to the north east corner of the Common, must be conceded. Your personal observation, so immediate and constant, of the existing abuse, is of great weight in sustaining this judgment. It were doubtless better to allow what is so difficult of prevention; and, in a direct and sensible way, control and regulate it as a recognized use.

Your generous contribution to the funds of the COMMISSION is accepted with thanks and will be expended in accordance with your wishes. In acknowledging its receipt, the Chairman is reminded of a munificence that, years since, prompted to the construction of a FOUNTAIN, upon the *Common*; and which, had it been properly estimated and aided, would have decked that most central and conspicuous of our Public Grounds with a suitable and charming ornament.

Believe me, very truly yours,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, *Chairman*.

The path-way indicated in the foregoing notes will be constructed in the coming Spring. There was no absolute hurry for it, and the COMMISSION were reluctant to interfere with the enjoyment of the *Common*, by the people, any farther than was indispensable. The construction of the PARADE occasioned a sufficient impediment to passage, for the season. Meanwhile incessant use has more clearly defined the route to be followed and at the same time confirmed, beyond all dispute, its necessity. But it must not be inferred from this concession that the COMMISSION will construct paths wheresoever trespass may encroach; or smooth new ways for the "unclean feet" that dodge around the sanctuary.

The motive of the subjoined letter, of which a copy was sent to each member of the COMMISSION; in studied slight of the Chairman, its official head; may supply a simple conundrum for the curious. Those quicker-witted will note how Christianity may still furnish points for heathen imitation, in "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain."

WORCESTER, July 24, 1878.

To E. W. LINCOLN, O. B. HADWEN, AND STEPHEN SALISBURY, JR.,

*Commissioners of Shade Trees and Public Grounds.*

*Gentlemen.*—The First (Old South) Parish and Society having quietly submitted to the annoyance and inconvenience of large quantities of rubbish, consisting in part of large mounds of earth, paving stones, snow plows, &c., around our church edifice for the past two years or more, request you to remove the same within reasonable time and that no more be deposited about the building, as we wish all things kept neatly about our house of worship.

Respectfully,

For and in behalf of the First Parish in Worcester,

A true Copy,

Attest,

ADDISON PALMER,

JEREMIAH WINN,

*Assessors of the First Parish.*

H. H. MERRIAM, *Clerk.*

To which attempt at fault-finding, or furtive effort to set up an adverse title, the subjoined answer was deemed sufficiently precise :—



COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
 Worcester, Massachusetts, July 28, A. D. 1878. }

To ADDISON PALMER, AND JEREMIAH WINN,

*Assessors of the First Parish.*

*Gentlemen.*—Your burden of complaint against this Commission was duly imposed upon me (its Chairman), by the letter-carrier.

I might reply by pointing out to you the provision of the City Charter which, after conferring the sole care, superintendence, and management of the Public Grounds belonging to said City of Worcester, upon a COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, continues to specify the mode whereby the City Council (*not* "the First Parish"), may remove "said Board, or any member thereof," should their official trust be mismanaged.

But I prefer to tell you that your letter is captious, querulous, and without excuse; or that you would have been better employed in expressing profound gratitude to this Commission for its final redemption of the *Common* from all manner of uncleanness. In that redemption your "Church Edfice" (whatever congregational structure that may be in essence and spelling!) might have shared. But your pulpit, unhappily for the community, was not included within the jurisdiction of this COMMISSION.

You will pardon any seeming disrespect in the delay of this reply to your letter. My secular engagements were such that it was imperatively necessary to defer all ecclesiastical correspondence to a day of rest.

I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Respectfully,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, *Chairman.*

The original note was mailed to Mr. Palmer,—senior Assessor. To be more explicit, that even he who runs may read this queer commentary from Mammon; it may be proper to state that there have been no "mounds of earth, paving, stones, snow plows, &c." accumulated or deposited by this COMMISSION anywhere but upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS of the City. The ultimate determination of the people as to the disposition of their property, in a possible future contingency, cannot of course be foretold. But, assuming that it will not be bartered away for a mess of pottage, it remains for this COMMISSION to repel all attempts—insidious or unblushing, to encroach upon their especial province. If the title of the People of Worcester to their *Common* is ever affected adversely, it shall not occur through any laches of this COMMISSION.

The recommendation that the *Kerb*, constructed along the Park Street side of the *Common*, be continued so as to enclose the entire territory; to include so much of Salem Square as may

not be needed for purposes of transit; and that a JET D' EAU, or *Fountain*, be erected in the spot long since assigned for one by the COMMISSION; are earnestly renewed. The necessity for public, not less than private, economy, and in great measure because of that, is keenly appreciated by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. But they are also aware that whatever municipal work must be done can never be achieved at less cost than now, when prices are low; nor more timely than in a period of comparative stagnation. Yet they have no wish to be importunate; and esteem their duty in the premises fully discharged, by keeping all such projects of improvement from lapsing into utter oblivion.

The *Shade Trees* along the Streets and Highways have been cared for, as far as possible, and are receiving particular attention at this time of writing. The COMMISSION met with a loss, apparently irreparable, in the removal to Providence, early in 1878, of Mr. Charles H. Perry. Agile, light, and perfectly fearless, he would go whither the COMMISSION dared not send him; and where no one, as yet, presents himself anxious to follow. A majority of the old and majestic Elms, throughout the City, require annual and seasonable pruning. This work demanded courage and good judgment; and Mr. Perry possesses both, in sufficient measure. At present, many of our larger trees are almost unsafe, because of limbs that no one can be found to remove. It is probably no exaggeration, to assume that a capable and industrious man might be employed profitably, for a whole year, and find himself unable to trim off all the branches that are decaying, or dead. The COMMISSION will do all that they can to remedy this evil condition: but among the critics who are sure to blame their sins of inevitable omission, how many would sanction the payment of wages, adequate to the remuneration of a competent forester,—could such be discovered!

Many trees have been issued to applicants, in detail, from the Nursery in Elm Park. Many more remain that should be planted out where they can remain, as they are crowded at present, and would be benefited by thinning. The better way is for a neighborhood to combine, and, obtaining the trees, set

them along their proximate streets. The interest in their preservation is thus made general; no one being indifferent to the mutilation of the Elm or Maple in front of his neighbor, because he has not one before his own door. It is to be hoped that these suggestions may not be wholly fruitless; but that many will avail themselves of the opportunity, in the early Spring, to procure Shade Trees from the COMMISSION, for the greater comfort and beauty of their vicinage.

The practice of the COMMISSION has conformed to the theory just outlined. Where a chance was afforded, by the completion of sidewalks, &c., as was notably the case upon upper Lincoln and lower Vernon Streets, rows of trees have been planted, and secured by guards, which met an obvious necessity and give promise of a thrifty existence. The COMMISSION keep in mind, for similar improvement, a number of streets in the South-Easterly part of the City. But their purposes are thwarted, in the main, by the palpable improvidence of thrusting roots directly in the way of the plow and mattock of the impending highway-man.

The COMMISSION have been asked, at frequent intervals during the past year, to set out trees in the yards adjoining the Public *School-Houses*. Those requests came from Teachers, the Superintendent, or Members of the School Board, indiscriminately. The urgency of the need, in this direction, finally led to the following correspondence, which is inserted here, that the views of the COMMISSION may be clearly understood.

28 GROSVENOR STREET, WORCESTER, Aug. 27, 1878.

E. W. LINCOLN, Esq.

*Sir.*—I have been thinking for some time past, of introducing an order in the School Board—looking to the planting of Shade Trees in such school-yards and sidewalks abutting thereon, as the Committee on School-Houses, or yourself, may determine.

If they should be planted, they will not only be an ornament to our bleak, cheerless Public Buildings, but will have a refining influence on the young children, which, in after years, will in many cases cause them to love, and be careful of trees and plants.

It strikes me that you have authority to plant trees on all the Public Grounds and walks.

I would feel obliged for your opinion on the matter; probable cost of planting about 300 trees; and whether the "Council" or "School Board" is the proper place to introduce an order, if such is needed.

I am sir, yours respectfully,

RICHARD O'FLYNN.

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
 Worcester, Massachusetts, August 24, A. D. 1878. }

RICHARD O'FLYNN, Esq:—

*My Dear Sir.*—Excuse the delay in answering your note of the 17th inst., as I hoped to find time to see you. I find that I cannot.

I agree with you that our School-Houses look “bleak and cheerless;” and I have always felt provoked about it because it is so wholly inexcusable and needless. But this Commission, and the City Council, (as I understand), are powerless in the matter, unless the Act passed, one or two years ago, clothed the Council with the power theretofore vested in the School-Board.

At any rate, the school-yards are not “Public Grounds” in the sense of those sections of the Municipal Charter whereby this Commission is established.

I have long desired that the love of Flowers and Trees should be impressed upon and encouraged in our children, as alike tending to refine their manners and produce a nobler development. I would gladly welcome the study of elementary botany by them, to the displacement of other branches of learning in nowise so useful or even ornamental.

As to the “probable cost of planting about 300 trees,” they *might* be had for \$1.00 a piece. This Commission pay \$1.25 for trees planted in the Spring, upon condition that they shall be replaced, in Autumn, when necessary.

With great respect, I remain

Yours, &c., &c.,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, *Chairman.*

Should this initiative lead to action, so much to be desired on many accounts, it is to be hoped that everything in the nature of a job will be sedulously avoided. The name of the tree-peddler, as of the other class—his congener—is legion. Care might also be taken to encourage a diversity of growth. Something besides foliage could be produced. The Mountain Ash—*et id genus omne*, is an intolerable nuisance. But the Tulip-Tree—*Liriodendron tulipifera*—is the pride of our North American Sylva, and can be safely transplanted. In the purchase of a dictionary the schools would insist upon “the best.” Let them be as exacting and worldly-wise in other respects! In any event, avoid naturalizing the Upas!

The work of the COMMISSION, upon *Elm Park*, during the past year, requires less description in detail, as it was so closely scanned while in progress by their fellow citizens. That work consisted, almost wholly, of grading and preparing the surface for the tamer grasses; and to this end, the plough and spade were kept in almost incessant motion. Should occasion serve, in the future, the writer hopes to indulge in eulogy of the Spade

and Spading-Fork as *the* tools for that coming tillage of the earth, which shall supply employment and increase for all. Their use would furnish occupation for many more men; (a thing desirable enough in itself); and the soil would be cultivated, as it needs and ought to be,—with complete thoroughness.

PARK AVENUE is so much resorted to, for all purposes, that the COMMISSON early sought to shelter it and improve its appearance. Trees of different kinds and of contrasting aspect, were planted for wind and snow breaks. The strips of ground, eastward of the AVENUE, was filled in and, in part, levelled and sown. Earth has been dumped further along, which will receive attention as soon, in the coming Spring, as the weather will permit. It is hoped to do all that is designed, in such good time and manner that nothing shall be left to mar the view. Possibly the critics who have assumed that those hemlocks were intended to stay, where they were heeled in—to save them—may then be relieved. Yet it will be absolutely necessary to have stout clumps of evergreen trees, in many exposed spots; if for no other reason, to obstruct and temper the fierce winds that blast vegetation and annoy the youthful skater. Upon such clump, or copse, the cultivated eye can rest in grateful repose: for others, few scenes in the Park would offer attraction. And yet that statement is possibly too strong. For it has been a pleasure to mark the evident delight of many, to whom any effort at landscape gardening must have been an entire novelty. For all such an education has commenced, that will imperceptibly but surely, soften the rough and uncouth disposition and elevate the whole man. But this,—only in proportion as Art is kept in due subordination to Nature; for trickery and meretricious adornments offend rather than attract.

Much has been achieved in the task of sloping the shores of the *Oval Pool*, so as to make the expanse of Water more conspicuous, and also render access to it easier. Great quantities of stone have come handy, which were used in building a walk for the women and children who take such innocent delight in feeding the Waterfowl. The gravel, that now encumbers the channel around the new *Grass Islet*, will be partly consumed in covering that walk, above the water line. The ground was

spaded up and almost entirely graded, before Winter set in, but it was not sown, as nothing is gained, ever, by putting seed into cold soil. Grass-seed sprouted in four days, last Autumn; but the ground was warm, and a tepid rain followed sowing, in a few hours.

Very general use was made of the *Pools* for skating, when frozen, as long as they remained or could be kept free from snow. The sport was heartily enjoyed by all ages, sexes, and conditions. Matron and maid; saint and sinner; the reverend clergy, and some in evident need of the gospel; met upon the same icy plane, and *saw the same stars!* The COMMISSION regret their inability to keep the surface clear, at all times. But, being desirous of excavating the *Circular Pool*,—so long outlined;—and finding the job of easier accomplishment in winter, when there is absolute exemption from any irruption of water; they have preferred business to pleasure. The cost of freeing the Ice from snow—upon a surface no larger, could not be much, as the shores are within such ready reach. And that cost,—were it far more considerable,—would be grudged by no one who is aware of the number to whom exhilarating exercise and robust health are afforded in such easy and abundant measure.

In bringing *Elm Park* to a proper grade, filling has had to be obtained, in open market; and of loam or hard-pan, as the chance offered. Twenty-five cents per yard has been an inflexible limit, to be exceeded in no event by the COMMISSION. In courtesy; and as an act of official duty, inspired by a desire to guard the municipal interests; one more effort was made to obtain the scrapings from the streets. A note, whereof the subjoined is a true copy, was written and transmitted, as follows:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Massachusetts, January 21st, A.D. 1878.

*To the Honorable City Council:—*

The Commission of Public Grounds would respectfully ask of the Honorable Council that the Street-Scrapings, (so called), may be delivered to their order, on Elm Park, either off Highland Street, or Park Avenue.

The Commission are aware that this would require carting in bad, or heavy weather, but the Honorable Council will perceive, with them, that only in such weather do the Streets require to be cleaned.

Neither do the Commission believe that the Highway Department would lend countenance to an imputation (inevitable should it object to this request,) that the Teams and Streets cannot do and endure, as much as they did, without hurt to any one, but six years ago.

For, and in behalf of the Commission,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

That application was referred to the Highway Committee, by which, in due course, an answer was returned that those scrapings could be delivered, as desired, for seventy-five cents per load. And it was left to be inferred that, at this last named price, no extra charge would be made for the seeds of dock, plantain and Canada Thistle, whereof those scrapings are so profuse. The COMMISSION trust that they will not be deemed insensible to such munificence. But, reflecting that the earth offered for sale by Messrs. Webb, Pike, McGrath, or Downey, was virgin and at least pure; and full of white clover seed, if any; that they asked but one-third as much as the City, to dump upon the very land of the City; the COMMISSION were forced to the conclusion that their duty was to buy dirt—and not,—to eat it! They are grateful for the co-operation of the Highway Department, in the old flush times when, if ever, high prices might have been expected. Having, long since, learned to appreciate hard-pan at its true value, they recommend others to get down to it as soon as possible.

*"The beams of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of Fir." Canticles, 1, 17.*

*"Why build ye not me an house of Cedar?" 1st Samuel, 7, 7.*

*"And David prepared Cedar trees in abundance." 1 Chron. 22, 4.*

It is very evident that there must have been a difference between the Cedars of Lebanon, and those of Auburn, in our County of Worcester. That the former grew upon the hills, and the latter in swamps, may serve to explain, as well as any other hypothesis, why the one should stand for a type of endurance while the other decays almost at once. The *Rustic Bridge*, erected by the COMMISSION in A. D. 1877, was found, late last Autumn, to be unsafe from the effects of dry-rot. It cost



little, but proved worth-less. Through the courtesy of Mr. C. S. Turner, some Hard Pine lumber was obtained, that had been seasoned for Railway use, out of which it was possible to frame a bridge that gives every promise of durability. Mr. B. C. Jaques deserves the chief credit for adapting the design, from sketches in the Public Library. It appears to the COMMISSION alike substantial and graceful. There is something to be thankful for in the fact that no accident occurred before the weakness in the former bridge was detected. At times it had sustained as many as could get upon it.

By a recent computation of the County Commissioners, A. D. 1878, the City of Worcester receives, net, the sum of \$2,810.98, from the Dog Fund. It is understood that so much enues, as clear profit, to the Free Public Library; though why—is not so plain, since the licenses are not for dogs-ears. The *Public Grounds* get none of it, although the positive nuisance of Dogs can neither be overlooked nor over-rated. Nothing animate occasions greater annoyance and loss to the Terrae culturist. Fowls can be confined, expelled, or at worst exterminated. But it looks too much like butchery to shoot a dog. Yet they course everywhere, scouring through new plantations and tearing up smooth lawns; and ever without check or restraint from their owners. It almost seems that the majority, who possess without caring for these brutes, suppose that a municipal license, to exist, carries with it a privilege to trample and pollute. For, apart from the indecency of their animal nature, their filthy habits are positively destructive. Even robust vegetation is seared by them, and their fire by file is death to each tenderer plant. Of no conceivable use to any one, and an actual damage to many! they are suffered to run at large, careering over garden and park; not maintained for sport, or watch and ward; but kept in an extravagant existence, idle, mischievous, and pernicious. Their existence offers this inscrutable problem: at which end are they least noxious!

Unquestionably, much of the mischief done to the public property is a result of thoughtlessness. Let one child take a bloom, even from an Azalea, and its loss might not be noticed. Let all do so; and all have multiplied the rights, as they should



feel the restraints of one; and what would be left for the enjoyment of the community at large! The *Chairman* gladly makes record of the ready obedience yielded to him, when he has thought that juvenile exuberance was verging upon mischief. But he can not be omnipresent. And wantonness sometimes takes upon itself shape and form,—or mars both,—in those dark glimpses of the moon where so much is disclosed to the “Tireless Watchers.” Two or three gentlemen of this City, authorized as special Police, could put a new aspect upon the cause of moral reform by a system of judicious checks imposed upon what they see, or *think they see*! Their leisure might not be wholly wasted in restraining an hallucination! If they curbed aught else,—so much the better.

But there can be no necessity,—as there will hereafter be no tolerance,—for the disregard of obvious rules which insist that the use of public property shall not degenerate into its abuse and destruction. The COMMISSION claim the credit of having been “slow to anger.”

The COMMISSION have frequently called attention to the need of a more vigilant supervision of the *Public Grounds*, by the paid Police, especially upon Holidays and Sundays. Generally resorted to upon such occasions, it is not surprising that the rude and boorish should, at times, molest and offend the peaceful and well-behaved throng. Very rarely, a more flagrant case is developed, in which an overt tendency to crime requires summary check or punishment. An instance of this nature happened, last February, that deserves attention because of some peculiar features which characterise it. An attempt at indecent assault, upon a little girl who was skating in *Elm Park*, was arrested, and the offender taken into custody by Officer Martin, to whose fortunate proximity the people are indebted; and to whose ready zeal and willing co-operation upon all occasions, the COMMISSION would bear open testimony. The offender, in this case, was put under heavy bonds for his appearance before the Grand Jury, at the ensuing May Term. *He never appeared*. In some mode, that may bear investigation, the case was stifled and the accused committed to the State Lunatic Hospital—Chronic. Now—here was no trial,—and of

course no commitment to the Hospital, under sentence. Why is not this man as free as ever to invade our streets and *Public Grounds*, and satiate his beastly propensities? He had been in the Hospital, before; and his relations, if not the officials, had been warned that he was an unsafe person to be at large. Arrests are useful: but of how much real value can they be, if neither legal punishment nor restraint shall ensue?

More recently—in November last, on Sunday, the 3d, a crowd of half-grown boys were allowed to amuse themselves by stoning the fountain. One of them was overheard to say: “Let’s break the damned thing, any way!” At sight of the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION, who was just then entering the *Park*, in the constant exercise of an oversight that might well be relieved by the occasional supervision of some of our paid officials, the youthful offenders took to their heels. Just so,—the “wicked flee when no man pursueth.”

Appreciating fully later steps in the desired direction, the COMMISSIONERS nevertheless feel that they owe it to their own sense of duty, to impress upon the *Honorable Council* a conviction of the absolute importance of due protection to the public peace and property within the *Public Grounds*. Sin and crime intruded into Eden: but it did not remain unnoticed and unmolested.

But the duties of the COMMISSION are not wholly unrelieved by gleams of sunshine. What brighter vision could they wish to behold than that which fascinated their gaze on May 4th, when a Bridal Party, the ceremony completed, selected ELM PARK as the scene of innocent enjoyment: their white garments blending and contrasting with the nascent foliage and herbage, and their sportive freedom challenging admiration and envy from those older, and hopeless of renewing their youth!

And still those Marriage Fees pass through the hands of the City Clerk, but to be merged in Contingent Expenses, or lost in the fathomless abyss of the Sinking Fund.

A number of Ducks and rare Geese were placed in the Pools of ELM PARK, during the past season, for whose introduction, acknowledgement is due to the unselfish zeal and co-operation

of Mr. Charles Belcher.\* It has been pleasant to note the constant interest taken in these Water-fowl; to observe how their habits and wants were studied, and with what assiduity children and, as often, grown people, would spend hours in feeding them and watching their movements. Even such positive instruction in Natural History may not be despised by the pedant. And, encouraged by their observation of this interest in the Water-fowl,—so universal and continuous,—the COMMISSION will cherish, yet more tenaciously, their hope of, at some time, enclosing Deer within that depressed triangle of land, at the North-Western corner of the Park, where occurs the intersection of Highland Street by PARK AVENUE.

A slight service which it fell within the power of the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION, in a private capacity, to render to Messrs. Ellwanger & Barry, of Rochester, New York, was richly repaid by those eminent Horticulturists in the only way in which remuneration would be accepted. A crate was received from them, carefully packed, wherein were found, in admirable condition, the following named bulbs or roots, of which a descriptive list is recited, in justice to the donors, viz:—

*Lilium* :

Var . . . *Album* ; *Auratum* ; *Roseum* ; *Rubrum*.

*Pæonia Paradoxa* ; var. *Pulcherrima plena* ; crimson, with purple shade ; centre petals small and compact.

*Pæonia Officinalis*, ; var. *Andersoni*,—single, rosy blush ; very early and showy ; dwarf.

*Rosea*,—

*Rubra*,—double crimson ; of monstrous size.

*Schiller* [E. & B.] purplish red ; double, and very fine.

*Pæonia Sinensis* : var,—

*Anemone flora striata* ; outer petals large, rosy violet ;

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\*NOTE. While these Reports should "nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice," yet it is indispensable to their retention of the implicit faith hitherto reposed in their statements, that they should utter only absolute verity. The above tribute, in the text, is therefore retracted ;—if, with regret, without reserve. The City may have fewer Geese ;—! but it will also credit one less imposture.  
E. W. L.

inside ones small, rose and salmon; very large and fine.

*Baron James Rothschild*,—outside petals rose, centre salmon; very large and fine.

*Var: Carnea elegans*,—Flesh color, with a few carmine streaks in the centre.

“ *Carnea striata*, [E. & B.] Flesh color, striped with red, very fine.

“ *Claptoniana*,—Creamy white; inside petals straw color.

“ *Delachii*,—dark purplish crimson, resembling *Potsii*, but more double and richer foliage; one of the best dark.

“ *Duchesse d' Amaule*,—Light rose; centre straw color, tipped with red; beautiful.

“ *Edulis, vel fragrans*,—Violet rose, all of one color, very full and sweet.

“ *Globosa grandiflora*,—

“ *Grandiflora carnea plena*,—Very large; outside petals delicate blush; centre fringed, yellowish; sweet and fine.

“ *Isabella Karlitzky*,—Deep rose; centre petals small, shaded with salmon.

“ *Louis von Houtte*,—Dark crimson, very compact.

“ *Modeste*,—Deep rose, bright, showy; very large, distinct and fine.

“ *Mutabilis rosea*,—Outer petals rose, centre blush.

“ *Papaveri flora*,—White, lightly tinged with yellow, and marked with red in centre; very fine.

“ *Plenissima rosea superba*,—Very large, globular and full; deep rose, slightly tinged with salmon; superb.

“ *Purpurea superba*,—Very large, purplish crimson flower; outside petals large; centre small and compact; tallest and most showy.

“ *Reevesi*,—Delicate rose, clouded; centre petals fringed.

“ *Reine des Roses*,—Deep rosy lilac; large and full, superb.

“ *Striata rosea alba*; Blush, nearly white; inside petals fringed, slightly marked with red.

“ *Triomphe du Nord*,—Violet rose, shaded with lilac; beautiful.

It will be noticed that a majority of these Pæonies are of the variety known as the *Sinensis*. Must the Chinese go?

The COMMISSION would also express their sense of obligation to Mrs. A. D. Foster, for vigorous specimens of *Cornus florida*; and to their associate, Mr. Hadwen for a young and thrifty tree of *Larix leptolepis*;—a new Larch which promises to surpass its Scotch congener in beauty and delicacy of grace. The *Chairman* as usual, planted out such Geraniums and other flowering plants as he had kept through the Winter; and these with their off-sets, helped to ornament the knoll southward from the Diamond Pool. A few seedlings of the *Aquilegia Chrysantha* also survived exposure, in a location that was too moist for them, and which proved fatal to a majority of similar plants. Well-founded hopes of better fortune, on a more extended scale, are cherished for the coming season. A somewhat unfortunate experience of the *Chairman* will bear allusion, and may be a caution to others. Hearing of the discovery, in Florida, of the *Nymphæa flava*,—a yellow-blooming variety, of which our common White Pond Lily,—*Nymypæa Odorata*,—is the predominant type at home, he procured some roots and sank them in the Diamond Pool. They started finely and were putting forth vigorous leaves when the Water-Fowl were introduced. Thereafter every leaf was nipped off as it appeared. The *Nymphæa* from Florida might not have survived our winters. But it was a disappointment, not to be allowed to test its endurance. The trial may be renewed, after the completion of the *Circular Pool*, from which, in that event, Water-fowl will have to be excluded. And, most likely,—the small boy who loveth nothing better than to roll up his trousers and wade in for flowers that he knows are in-lawed.

The Act, to enable the City of Worcester to acquire Newton Hill for the purposes of a Park and a Reservoir, was renewed, at the instance of the COMMISSION, after consultation with the Municipal Authorities. There is no probability that it will be employed for the present. It would be no part of the purpose of the COMMISSION, to show what might be accomplished in the way of landscape gardening, as has been pleasantly imagined elsewhere, were that Hill in possession of the City.

Some stones removed or put out of sight; some trees planted, in clumps, for wind-breaks; and possibly facilities for a somewhat fearful enjoyment of the toboggan! That would be all; the ground left, free as air, for common fun and recreation. Very likely,—nothing will come of it. But, burdened as it is, even Worcester may yet profit from the knowledge that (given the water) street mains are cheaper than hose.

In the very first Report of the COMMISSION, as now instituted, while suggesting a comprehensive plan for the adornment and greater convenience of the City, occurs the following passage:—  
“Above all—as indispensable to the completion and symmetry of the design, LAKE QUINSIGAMOND should be embraced within its scope. The eye of covetousness already glances at that beautiful sheet of water. It may be that the people of Worcester will consent to hold the fairest ornament of their city at the will, or upon sufferance, of the capital: but it is not believed that such tame acquiescence will be permitted by any one who has the wit to foresee, in a utilitarian sense only, the advantages that would follow upon its undisputed control. The opinion of the Commission is decided that the city of Worcester should obtain, from the Great and General Court, power to occupy and possess Lake Quinsigamond, for the purposes of a PUBLIC PARK, without prejudice to the rights of riparian owners, whatever they may be. In this way, if in no other, could the level of its waters be maintained at their average height, thus preserving the smooth and verdant banks which so much enhance its beauty. Nor can any other method be devised, half as effectual, of forestalling future attempts to divert the water of the Lake for the supply of metropolitan thriftlessness and waste.”

This particular project, like most others that are in advance of their time, attracted little attention. To that indifference there was, however, one notable exception. George Jaques;—a public benefactor,—whose mind was not so fraught with its own purposes and plans of exceeding munificence, that he could not perceive the merit of measures proposed for the common welfare; cordially welcomed the suggestion, and advocated it in the newspapers of the day. Since then it has

rested. On the 20th day of July, ult., the subjoined paragraph was published in the Spy :—

“ “As an explanation of the reason of the present low water in the Lake, it may be stated that the mill-owners down stream have found their dams unsound, and rather than repair them, have drawn off the pond, lowering it four feet. It is a great inconvenience in many ways, and mars the beauty of the Lake. It seems too bad that private interests should so stand in the way of the public good.”

That is bad, it is true enough. But there is one thing which is worse and at the same time inexpressibly humiliating. A great community, of the English speaking race, heretofore somewhat famous for resisting the first attempts at encroachment, submits supinely to action prompted by selfish greed. Since attention was concentrated upon the beauties of Lake Quinsigamond by their constant eulogy in these Reports, large public and private investments have been made around its shores. Access to it has been facilitated by the construction of LAKE AVENUE, and the Shrewsbury Railroad, not omitting mention of the almost total renovation of the main highway. The vast pile of buildings erected by the State for its Lunatics (not chronic) represents a present value far exceeding the former estimate of that entire lacustrine territory. Into and out from the Lake, at whatever level its waters are maintained, the drainage of the Hospital, and of all other buildings, deodorised perhaps, but not necessarily purified, must inevitably flow. In direct proportion to the volume of the lake, will be the consequent dilution. Even a minimum of offence may yet become so desirable as to require attainment, reckless of cost.

Now, why should not the City of Worcester and the Town of Shrewsbury unite in obtaining, from the General Court, an Act establishing the Lake as a WATER-PARK and vesting its control in those two municipal corporations? Such an Act—prejudicial to none; nor injuriously affecting the rights of those whose interest in a high stage of water is secondary to the avarice that relucts at the support of an adequate dam, at the outlet of the Lake; would satisfy all requirements. Few of our people know where, or what is the outlet of the Lake,—a wide-spread ignorance in which the writer confessedly shared,



until recently. How many are aware that the erection of a sufficient dam—but a few rods long—is all that is essential to the maintenance of the water, in the Lake, at any height desired? A level would be attained, with perfect ease, that, permitting to the mill-owners every existing right, would overflow the shores now laid bare, and restore facility of access to countless points and places which have been rendered almost inaccessible. In the coming conflict with privilege, this shall not be the least among the issues to be determined;—how far shall the common weal, as embodied in the common law, be set aside and perverted by every dog-in-the-manger!

Still further,—a higher stage of water, setting back upon the causeway, would greatly facilitate the construction of those openings for a water-way—that series of inverted arches,—which have been so often advised in these Reports as indispensable to a recovery of the use of the Lake. Cent-per-cent will sneer at the folly of the writer; and the victims of his usury may join with him in deprecating such wild infatuation. But the future historian of Worcester will point to the utilization of the Lake, as a potent factor among the causes that revived her dormant prosperity; to the storage and retention of a great volume of water, whereby the winds are tempered and the climate softened, enabling the Pomologist to rely, with complete assurance, upon a certain return from his labors. Then upon either shore,—as around the lesser Lakes of central New York,—shall be seen hill-sides crowned with vineyard and peach-orchard; their ripe harvest none the less prized that it is of our own culture, and all the more luscious because grown at home. That the trial has not been made hitherto, is not the fault of this COMMISSION; who do not mean to be censured if all the conditions are not propitious hereafter for the first intelligent pioneer. And among those conditions, whether as affecting the beauty of the landscape encompassing, or controlling and modifying the climatic influences emanating from the Lake, nothing can surpass in importance an ample volume of water.

A WATER PARK established; and the control over its average level, or volume, vested in Shrewsbury and Worcester;



there would be no resulting expense, save at the will of those municipalities. They might mend the present inadequate dam ; build a new, stronger, and higher one ; or leave the work severely alone. But their possession of exclusive jurisdiction over that lovely Lake could harm none and might enure to the common welfare.

All which is Respectfully Submitted, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASS.,  
January 27th, A. D., 1879.



*11. C. C. . . .*

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

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ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1898.

OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

WORCESTER, MASS.,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1879.

WORCESTER:

PRINTED BY SNOW, WOODMAN AND COMPANY.

47 MAIN STREET.

*12 P. 101*



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

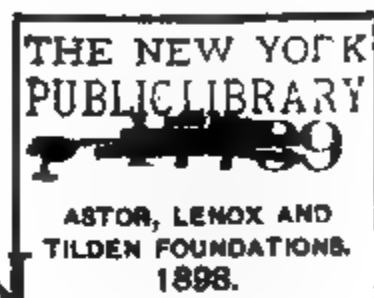
COMMISSION

OF

DUNDS,

*Worman.*

AND COMPANY,





# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

---

*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL.*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, in compliance with the Twenty-First Section of the Municipal Charter, hereby submit a "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of "the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon, and in said "streets and highways, and an account of Receipts and Ex-  
penditures for the same," as required during the month of January:

*City of Worcester*

*In account with*

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Dr.	
To Appropriation for A. D. 1879,	\$5,000 00
Revenue, for Geese slain by Dogs,	7 00
	<hr/>
	\$5,007 00

### EXPENDITURES.

For Manual Labor,	\$2,448 83
Hire of Teams and men,	113 39
Plants, Trees, Planting and Pruning,	973 97
Tools and Hardware,	185 64
Grass-seed and Fertilizers,	99 07
Loam and Manure,	497 67
Printing Annual Report, &c., &c.,	32 23
Lumber and Carpentry,	92 04

For Grain, . . . . .	7 60
Gravel, . . . . .	11 00
Blacksmith work, . . . . .	13 55
Engineering, setting tree-guides, and map of Elm Park, . . . . .	28 18
Water Pipe, Drain Pipe, Cement, labor, &c., . . . . .	184 08
Plumbing, Pump on Common, &c., &c., . . . . .	10 28
Stationery, . . . . .	1 75
Freight and trucking, . . . . .	11 78
Tool and Boat House, materials, constructing, . . . . .	258 61
	<hr/>
	\$4,971 64
Unexpended and transferred to Sinking Fund, . . . . .	\$85 37

Upon the third day of April, A. D., 1871, the *Honorable Council*, both branches concurring, on motion of *Alderman Frank H. Kelley*, unanimously

*Resolved*, That the *City Council* assure the COMMISSIONERS of their cordial co-operation in any effort for the improvement of the Common, and to that end will appropriate such necessary means and facilities as shall promise the most efficient and rapid execution of the work, consistent with a judicious economy.

From that day to this, the *Honorable Council* has readily granted all reasonable requests of the COMMISSION; which, in return, spared no effort to justify such manifest confidence. Mayors have succeeded each other, in queer alternation, as personal politics bore sway; but, through all these municipal changes, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS have received—they believe, merited—executive co-operation and trust. And, while they could wish for no heartier friendship than was accorded to them by *His Honor*, whose elusion of a longer continuance in office has just disappointed his fellow-citizens; they can but esteem it of happy augury that the affairs of the city should be directed by one who proved himself,—as the above-quoted Resolution attests,—a friend in need, when, from the inexperience of the COMMISSION, it was to be a friend indeed.

The usual polite inquiry by the *Auditor*, necessary perhaps, but none the less perplexing,—“what sum will be wanted by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS for the ensuing year?”—recurs with the precision of the Winter solstice. Balances, if unexpended, unintended certainly, are merged and disappear in



the Sinking Fund. Requirements present themselves, or are urged, with inexorable persistency; which must be met in any way that is found effectual; and for which an abrupt official no! is never accepted as a sufficient answer. One citizen desires shade trees along the street that he chiefly frequents, and scoffs at the explanations why he does not get them upon his first peremptory demand. It is so natural for each of us to consider his own wants imperative, and to esteem hope deferred as the proper lot of every one but himself. And then, again, he desires shade trees,—not Public Grounds! His private lawns, or gardens, are ample for all his purposes of recreation, and, if more is expected, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

The complacency with which some men will stroke a

“belly with fat capon lined,”

and, contemplating the keen edge upon their axe that was just ground at the public expense, thank God! that they are not extravagant, like the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, for example! Some such patriots content themselves with taxing the childless, for free education. Others enforce a levy, that the houseless may enjoy the benefit of an efficient Fire Department. There is even a platoon, more or less,—who advocate the maintenance of a Police Force,—on foot or mounted, (in athletic slang, “go as you please!”) that the legion from whom the City Treasurer is powerless to extract a Poll Tax, may suffer no loss “in mind, body, or estate.”

It should be pretty obvious to even a dull observer, that it takes all sorts of men to make—a city. The appetites, passions, tastes, of those men,—the municipal population—are fortunately dissimilar. Fortunately, since otherwise a stagnation worse than mortal paralysis would fall upon the community. Hence the absolute necessity of consideration for the opinions, prejudices, if you please, of others; and a frank recognition of the fact that our dislikes should not be a measure for the preferences of another. Is it not the truest philosophy which lives and lets live? That, surely, is the wisest administration which, recognizing all alike, builds good roads, encourages sound

learning, and plants the *Academe* with shady groves. Such places become more attractive with the passing years, arresting the notice of the casual traveller, and inducing the permanent settlement of the cultivated man, who, not unfairly, judges that the true character of a people may be inferred from the neat and tasteful aspect of their private and public grounds.

Nor should it be forgotten that Time is an element which can be made to favor this COMMISSION, only, of all the civic departments. Not even a rill may run in Old Maids' Brook; Bladder Pond may subside to its lowest level; but vegetable growth is continuous—as some naturalists think, incessant. How important, then, that there should be neither interruption nor delay to the planting of those trees, upon which we are to depend for future adornment and shelter! The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, felicitating themselves upon much that has been accomplished, visible to all, can look back upon the evident results of their labors, without fearing any such invidious contrasts as have been drawn, once or twice, by men who could trace better than they could dig. And yet, all over the city, they can find streets without a single shade-tree to ward off the fierce rays of the summer sun; or to stop a runaway horse, when, in his mad career, he would switch off the wrecked carriage dangling at his heels to a thronged and affrighted sidewalk. By their own direct efforts in the past year, they have done what was possible. They have been seriously disappointed by the lâches of some who promised to set out trees, if the COMMISSION would but furnish them, along the streets whereon they abutted. In notable instances, those trees have been kept heeled in until the season became too far advanced for out-door planting. An effort will be made during the coming Spring to get away from the work on Elm Park, pressing as it will be, long enough to attend, in person, to some streets which should be supplied with trees at once. When those trees shall have been planted, the individual coöperation of our fellow-citizens is solicited, in advance, to prevent possible or punish actual mutilation.

Meanwhile, the example of Senator Hoar is open for imitation by any of his fellow-citizens—no caveat having been lodged

hitherto. Like Rice (Darius) and Jaques, Hadwen and Hartshorns, he was desirous of doing something for posterity, and—did it. Having planted either side of Hanover Street, from Belmont northward, the COMMISSION supplemented his work by supplying guards and repairing the walks. Articles in the newspapers, last Autumn, advised a subscription fund in aid of the sum ordinarily applicable to the setting out of shade trees. Any citizen thus disposed, may achieve as much at comparatively slight expense, by conference and coöperation with this COMMISSION. While time now wastes, unimproved, trees might be growing and affording ever-increasing shade.

In their estimate for an appropriation, the COMMISSION kept in view the continuance of work upon Elm Park; the care (which comprises pruning and, at times, excision or eradication) of shade trees; with such limited planting as sparse means may allow. They would be rejoiced above measure, the *Honorable Council* concurring with them in their judgment of its importance, were they to be enabled to set out shade trees along the whole length of Millbury Street, on both sides, wherever practicable. They would be glad to repeat the experiment of old upon Vernon Street, guaranteeing that the method of planting should be sufficient, under their own supervision, whether the jack-knife was withheld or not. Belmont Street has never been out of their mind; but agents of the State having promised to set out trees, if provided by the COMMISSION, along the entire line whereon the Commonwealth abutted, attention was temporarily diverted from the westerly end of the old Turnpike. Not everything can be done simultaneously, even by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS; whose faith, though boundless, is inadequate to move a cubic yard of excavation—much more, human inertia. Shade trees should be planted, in quantity and at once, to gain time and growth; but, to that end, the means must be supplied by the *Honorable Council*. Their constituents are more than willing.

The uses to which the Common may be degraded is a legitimate matter for discussion. There does not seem to be any good reason why writers for the press, in column of attack, should go out of their way to berate and vilify the COMMISSION

OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. Its admitted purpose is for a *Common* and *Training Field*. What constitutes a training field is obvious enough, and has been made even more manifest at the pleasure of the Continentals, or of the Volunteer Militia. Wherein it may be a common is not so plain. Possibly it is on that account that the "tract of ground bounded by Front, Main, Park and Salem streets" is confided to the "sole care, superintendence and management" of a COMMISSION, by which "all necessary rules and regulations in the execution of their trust may be" established. Unfortunately, the charter did not clothe the COMMISSION with power to enforce those rules and regulations.

The COMMISSION are clear for what that *Common* should not be abused. Convenient and sufficient paths having been built, the green lawns should be protected, in the interest of all, from intrusion and consequent disfigurement by any. Upon public holidays, of course, there would be greater license. Nor, with the consent of the COMMISSION, will facilities be furnished for the bummer and hoodlum, whom we have too much with us, that they may, at their dirty ease, insult passers-by of either sex. It is but a short while since a large number of settees were fixed in position along the various pathways. Not a day elapsed that some one was not mutilated, broken or wrenched from its place. They were removed, finally, upon a general and intolerable complaint from ladies in every condition in life,—the bee as well as the butterfly,—that they could never pass those settees without having to listen to filthy language and ribald comment. Undoubtedly, they would have supplied a comfortable rest for well-behaved citizens. But the bummer and dead-beat are also citizens, likewise wish a rest in the shade, and are devout disciples of the hoodlum gospel, that,—

"They should get who have the power,  
And they should keep who can."

It may be urged that 'smut' within the *Public Grounds* should be summarily suppressed. Very true. Yet how shall its eruption be stayed, if the police cannot, or will not, tend vent?

Again, in the early Summer, after the *City Council* had voted

to have a series of out-door concerts, it became desirable to locate a band-stand. Not a word was said to the COMMISSION. Yet, assuming that various unsuitable places had been occupied, because of objection to any location upon the *Common*, it was thought in good taste, as well as just, to spice the newspapers, as follows: "Many are foolish enough to believe that the *Common* is admirably adapted to such purposes." Such peppery writers must have been astonished to find how easy it was to get a stand erected upon the *Common*, when the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS were treated with even ordinary civility, and had the assurance, to which they were entitled, that the structure should not only be ornamental, but should be restricted to its appropriate uses. Whether that restriction was respected upon all occasions is perhaps questionable. There is, at least, cause for a suspicion that, upon an evening when the platform subsided beneath an untterrified caucus, whether from gross weight or inherent unsoundness, the hardy burglars who invaded Mechanics' Hall so easily, made light of breaking into that band-stand, beneath the infrequent

"Glimpses of the Moon."

Such mishaps should work no impeachment of the vigilance of the Superintendent of Public Buildings, who was doubtless hearkening, with both ears, to the voice of the people.

While upon this subject, and in this mood, it occurs to the COMMISSION that no better opportunity will ever present itself, of thanking an unknown friend for the conception and gift of a characteristic and expressive

"*Dessin pour ce Jet d' Eau—dedie' avec beaucoup de respect au M. E. W. Lincoln.*"

The language may betray the nationality of the artist. But true Art is of no race; and tongues, confused at Babel, have been harmonized since. The intrinsic grace,—*esprit*,—so to speak, of *ce Dessin*, is of every clime and all schools: in brief—inimitable as indescribable. Barbarossa may as well arouse!

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS yield none of their views, heretofore expressed at considerable length, relative to

the development of the natural beauties wherewith Worcester is so lavishly endowed. But,—that others may be induced to share the same opinions,—it is indispensable that their gospel,—like all other—should be preached in and out of season. It is even better to repeat what was once stated well, than to risk weakening an argument, by putting it in other—perhaps inferior—phrase. Thus, in their Annual Report for A. D. 1871:—

“The opinion of the Commission is decided that the city of Worcester should obtain, from the Great and General Court, power to occupy and possess Lake Quinsigamond, for the purposes of a PUBLIC PARK, without prejudice to the rights of riparian owners, whatever they may be. In this way, if in no other, could the level of its waters be maintained at their average height, thus preserving the smooth and verdant banks which so much enhance its beauty. Nor can any other method be devised, half as effectual, of forestalling future attempts to divert the water of the Lake for the supply of metropolitan thriftlessness and waste.”

Reiterating that plea for the utilization of a priceless blessing, in their Report for A. D. 1878, the COMMISSION enforced their position by arguments drawn from the low stage of water during the preceding summer, and continue:—

“Since attention was concentrated upon the beauties of Lake Quinsigamond, by their constant eulogy in these Reports, large public and private investments have been made around its shores.” Access to it has been facilitated by the construction of LAKE AVENUE, and the Shrewsbury Railroad, not omitting mention of the almost total renovation of the main highway. The vast pile of buildings erected by the State for its Lunatics (not chronic) represents a present value far exceeding the former estimate of that entire lacustrine territory. Into and out from the Lake, at whatever level its waters are maintained, the drainage of the Hospital, and of all other buildings, deodorised perhaps, but not necessarily purified, must inevitably flow. In direct proportion to the volume of the lake, will be the consequent dilution. Even a minimum of offence may yet become so desirable as to require attainment, reckless of cost.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Still further,—a higher stage of water, setting back upon the

causeway, would greatly facilitate the construction of those openings for a water-way — that series of Inverted Arches, — which have been so often advised in these Reports as indispensable to a recovery of the use of the Lake. Cent-per-cent will sneer at the folly of the writer; and the victims of his usury may join with him in deprecating such wild infatuation. But the future historian of Worcester will point to the utilization of the Lake, as a potent factor among the causes that revived her dormant prosperity; to the storage and retention of a great volume of water, whereby the winds are tempered and the climate softened, enabling the Pomologist to rely, with complete assurance, upon a certain return from his labors. Then upon either shore, — as around the lesser Lakes of central New York, — shall be seen hill-sides crowned with vineyard and peach-orchard; their ripe harvest none the less prized that it is of our own culture, and all the more luscious because grown at home. That the trial has not been made hitherto, is not the fault of this COMMISSION; who do not mean to be censured if all the conditions are not propitious hereafter for the first intelligent pioneer. And among those conditions, whether as affecting the beauty of the landscape encompassing, or controlling and modifying the climatic influences emanating from the Lake, nothing can surpass in importance an ample volume of water.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Now, why should not the City of Worcester and the Town of Shrewsbury unite in obtaining, from the General Court, an Act establishing the Lake as a WATER-PARK and vesting its control in those two municipal corporations? Such an Act — prejudicial to none; nor injuriously affecting the rights of those whose interest in a high stage of water is secondary to the avarice that relucts at the support of an adequate dam, at the outlet of the lake; would satisfy all requirements.

A WATER PARK established; and the control over its average level, or volume, vested in Shrewsbury and Worcester; there would be no resulting expense, save at the will of those municipalities. They might mend the present inadequate dam; build a new, stronger, and higher one; or leave the work severely



alone. But their possession of exclusive jurisdiction over that lovely Lake could harm none, and might enure to the common welfare."

Now in this matter, as in aught else, what concerns everybody is cared for by none. Adopting it for their own business, therefore, the COMMISSION determined that it should not be their fault if some step was not taken looking to immediate overt action. By request of the *Chairman*, Mr. George S. Coe; to whom the low water and exposed shores of the Lake had been a daily offence; offered the following resolution, in Shrewsbury *Town Meeting*, in which, after explanation by the mover, it was carried without dissent:—

*Voted*;—that the Selectmen be requested to confer with the municipal authorities of the City of Worcester, upon the policy of establishing Lake Quinsigamond as a Water Park:—

And, to make application, in conjunction with said Municipal Authorities, should they mutually agree upon a plan; at the present or next session of the General Court of the Commonwealth; for the necessary legislation in the premises.

That occurred in March, or April, last; since when nothing has been done. The authorities of Shrewsbury and Worcester have held no conference; the *Selectmen* of the TOWN thinking, it is presumed, that overtures should proceed from their more consequential neighbor. But might they not realise that those who stand upon their dignity merely waste time, while the world keeps on moving: and that Worcester could reasonably conclude, since "it is more blessed to give than to receive," that any proposition should emanate from Shrewsbury, within whose territory lies the bulk of the Lake? At any rate,—this COMMISSION are powerless to accomplish. They can only recommend:—more's the pity!

Meanwhile it is understood that the manufacturing privileges, attaching to the waters of the Lake, are controlled by stronger hands than was the case but a few years ago. In that fact, the COMMISSION perceive no disadvantage:—rather,—an opportunity. The men of means, who have the sagacity to detect a business chance from across an ocean; and the courage to secure it when detected; are just the men with whom to deal. Ample water is of all consequence to them. To the people of Shrews-



bury and Worcester,—it is beauty and health. To the mill-owners,—it is subsistence and fortune. What insuperable obstacle, then, shall prevent such an accumulation of water above the highway that crosses the inlet of the Lake, at its northern extremity, as shall be adequate to maintain a fixed level below that highway, throughout the year? Assuredly not the actual value of the land that would have to be flooded: which is next to nothing. Perhaps it might be the fictitious estimate, that starts up like a fungus, to blight and arrest improvement. Men who go clame~~ing~~ing at high water could, of course, imagine that hopeless ravine worth something. But even avarice is powerless, at times, when confronted by the wit of man enlisted in a resolute effort to benefit his fellows. A handsome, capacious opening through the causeway,—like that series of Inverted Arches so often suggested in former Reports, would be a good thing; and the COMMISSION have faith in its ultimate construction. An extension of *Lake AVENUE*,—northerly,—would be better, just now:—and the COMMISSION indulge a hope that it will be forthwith ordered by the *Honorable Council*. The storage of water northward of the highway, and its retention until required to sustain the level of the Lake, would be best of all; and the COMMISSION, with rapt vision, behold the angels ascending and descending. But—even thus—Hercules cannot be expected to do the work. Nor will the men who suffer their sidewalks to be cumbered with snow; who allow the shade-trees in front of their estates to be mutilated, as may chance; to whom private damages are obvious, incessant, and so importunate, but betterments a mere phrase without meaning; and who were never known to forego a claim, only not baseless as founded upon a pretence; nor will such men,—(and their name, A. D. 1880, is Legion,—) concern themselves whether the lines of their fellow citizens are cast in pleasant places. So far as depends upon that class of patriots, the devil may take the hindmost! and welcome;—so long as his clutch is not laid upon their precious selves. How their race has been perpetuated is the chief puzzle: for the sacred narrative indicates no survivor. where, discoursing of their ancestors, it says that “the herd ran violently down a steep place into the Lake (*sic*) and were choked.”

The work upon *Elm Park*, throughout the past year, has been uninterrupted. The Circular Pool,—whose commencement had been indicated in the latest Report of the COMMISSION, was prosecuted steadily to completion. Excavated in cold weather, when the frozen state of the ground prevented any incursion of surface or spring water, this Pool was constructed under more favorable conditions than either the Diamond or Oval. It was thus possible to grade the bottom to a common level; thereby securing a desirable end, if one of rare attainment,—uniform depth of water. Had time allowed, the peat substratum would have been puddled with a coat of gravel, thus confining the bottom so that not even the shoe of the least number would mire. This Pool, like the others, is lined with stone, to protect the banks from abrasion. A yard-wide pathway has been made, around the edge, to accommodate children intent upon learning the art of navigation; and also as a convenience to people who desire easy access to the Water-Fowl.

The channel, by the Tool-House, was excavated as there has been need of material to construct or repair the larger walks. That material, consisting of a species of bog-iron ore, granulated by the action of the elements where it was first deposited; found in great abundance, as it is, has been of incalculable value to the COMMISSION. In but two instances have they felt impelled to purchase any gravel: and then only because a coarser article was desirable for effectual drainage. In taking out this material an *Islet* was left:—partly to avoid needless excavation;—somewhat for ornament;—and yet more,—because the more numerous these *Islets*, the more extensive the surface from which melting snows renew the ice for skating. The shrubbery and trees upon those *Islets*, when grown, will also furnish a shelter from the wind; from whatever point of the compass it may blow; which could not be surely predicated of a Pool with an unbroken expanse. All the shores of the Oval Pool, with the banks of its three *Islets*, are now faced with stone: a work that has been performed solely by the labor ordinarily employed in the *Park*. A portion of the Western Walk, originally built upon a basis of peat when the pool was first

outlined, will have to be backed by some of the gravel that lies so handy. Such tasks, like the completion of the channel by the Tool-House, are reserved for periods of low water; and of comparative leisure, when planting does not urge, nor grading positively refuse to be deferred longer,

The imperative need of a suitable place for Flowering Plants was also supplied, ere snow fell. A very considerable tract of land was thoroughly cleared of weeds and grass, perfectly enriched, and largely stocked with bulbs of early and recent acquirement. Herbaceous plants were set out in great number and variety, for the free-will offering of many of which, the COMMISSION have elsewhere expressed their indebtedness. With ordinary good fortune, there is no reason why this spot should not present abundant attraction throughout the following season. While the COMMISSION invite no comparisons, they fear none. Competent and impartial judges will admit;—of this plantation as of the other work that is visible and of possible estimate; that in the proportion of actual achievement to available means, neither in the metropolis nor elsewhere has there been a better return. The perfect snob will wander through the Public Gardens, in our larger cities, and gaze enraptured upon the *Tagetes signata pumila*. Safe at home, in Worcester, he waxes fiercely indignant because the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, familiar with the Marigold! take no stock in his idiocy.

The COMMISSION hope to grade a considerable portion of the *Park* during the coming Spring and Summer. This task has been undertaken, at intervals, but was often interrupted on account of the pressure of work that could neither be slighted nor postponed. There is but a short time wherein planting is practicable: to that, of course, all other things must give way. A. D., 1879, was the first year, within the personal experience of the *Chairman*, when it was possible to set out trees and shrubs, with reasonable confidence, so late as the twelfth (12th) day of December. Grading, however, is independent of vegetation; and it will be prosecuted, the weather permitting, with diligence, and, it may be hoped, success.

The COMMISSION were the glad recipients of numerous

heartly gifts of Plants and Shrubs during the past year. The admiration bestowed upon two beautiful mounds was due, not to the taste of the COMMISSION inspired by ample means; but to private liberality, through which an inadequate provision was happily supplemented. Mr. Hermann Lange deserves especial thanks,—since a larger part of the effect produced, throughout the flowering season, must be attributed to his timely and lavish supplies. Among the plants received from him may be enumerated—*Asters*, 150;—*Cineraria Maritima*, 24;—*Ricinus*, 14—*Geranium*, 100;—*Iresine*, 100;—*Coleus*, 100;—*Dahlia*, in variety;—*Feverfew* and *Fuchsia*, in quantity. His cordial co-operation has also been extended in every possible way.

The friendly interest of *Mrs.* Alfred D. Foster, has also been consistent and unremitting. In her garden, as in but a few others, are preserved most of those herbaceous plants with which Worcester was richly stocked in the early days of the Horticultural Society. That some of them can be found in existence at all is owing to the purity of a taste which refused to subordinate beauty to fashion; and which finds its best reward in the return of popular partiality to the more correct standards of former years. The plants given by *Mrs.* Foster were so numerous that some may have been overlooked: it is hoped, however, that the subjoined list may not be seriously deficient:—*Achillea*, mille folium rubrum;—*Actaea*, racemosa;—*Achillea*, ptarmica fl. pl.;—*Anemone Japonica* (spicata);—*Arundo*, variegata;—*Baptisia*, cerulea;—*Calycanthus*;—*Campanula*, percisi-folia;—*Clematis*;—*Convallaria majalis*;—*Delphinium*;—*Diclytra*;—*Digitalis*, (6);—*Funkia* cerulea;—*Iris* (12);—*Kerria Japonica*;—*Lathyrus* lati-folius;—*Lychnis*;—*Pæonia* (6);—*Phlox* (24);—*Polemonium* ceruleum;—*Spiraea filipendula*;—*Yucca*, filamentosa.

The COMMISSION would likewise acknowledge their obligations to the *Misses* Burnside, for a bountiful provision of the following named plants:—*Hemerocallis*;—*Iris* (24);—*Pæonia* in var. (38);—*Phlox* in var. (100).

From *Mrs.* Francis H. Kinnicutt was received an immense mass of *Funkia alba*.

*Mrs.* Penelope W. Canfield gave a fine, well-grown specimen of the three-thorned Acacia (*Gleditschia tri-acanthos*), a seedling from a living tree that was derived by the late Gov. Lincoln from the original at Mount Vernon.

From their associate, Mr. Hadwen, the COMMISSION had some forty (40) strong roots of the *Canna*.

And from the *Chairman*;—nearly a hundred *Geraniums*; enough seedling plants of *Aquilegia* Chrysantha to show for themselves during the coming Summer;—together with the following *Cannæ*; whose names are recorded here, that, if lost from the Park, the varieties may yet be known as in actual possession. Dr. Gromier; Coquette; Mons Alegatier; Premices de Nice; Tricolor; Compacta; President Faivre; Brenningsi; Superba; Souvenir de Barillet des Champs; Bonneti Excelsa; Victor Lemoine; Ornement du Grand Rond.

In addition, the COMMISSION enjoy the promise of many another shrub and tree, for some of which they must invent, if they cannot otherwise find, leisure to go and secure. It cannot be doubted, as has been modestly hinted in former Reports, that many of our citizens own numerous flowering plants and shrubs which have either outgrown the space allotted to them, or require, for healthy development, more room than can well be spared. For any such, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would be thankful. And,—while contributing to adorn *Elm Park*, they would not be entirely lost to their former owners; who would have the opportunity, at will, of beholding them in their new location. A great deal has been achieved towards making a collection of herbaceous plants,—perennial or other;—but much more could be accomplished with that general co-operation which the COMMISSION feel that it is not hopeless to expect. Many species,—once common in Worcester;—and none the less beautiful because common; have almost disappeared from cultivation on account of the latter-day distaste for everything that could not be cramped and prostrated in beds. A floral Procrustes appeared to wield arbitrary sway; lopping here and stretching there—whose mandates were as senseless as most of those to which fashion pays heed, and yet were obeyed as implicitly. A sounder taste bids fair to prevail ere

long—when credit shall be given to each flower and plant for the beauties that are obvious and beyond challenge; without derogation because they lack other charms denied to them in their very creation.

The interest felt in the work of the COMMISSION by Mr. Charles S. Sargent, *Professor of Arboriculture* in the University at Cambridge, has been steadily manifested. During the last Autumn, he was kind enough to import for the Public Grounds, from Mr. Anthony Waterer, of England, a lot of *Azalea mollis*, and *Azalea* (of sorts), which came to hand in unimpaired and superior excellence. It is pleasant for her sons to mark the widening usefulness of our highest institution of learning, and to receive such positive evidence that she has at length found out that round pegs,—not square sticks—are alone suitable to fill round holes.

Criticism of the method preferred by the COMMISSION, in the development of *Elm Park*, has been for the most part kindly, perhaps partial. Exception is however taken, now and then, to the extent to which water is employed as a means of ornament, that does not seem to be founded upon a catholic judgment. In the grand design of the Universe, more than three-fifths of the earth's surface is covered by the various oceans. Infinitesimally small by contrast, so as to make the bare statement almost ludicrous, scarcely four of the twenty-eight acres comprehended within *Elm Park* will be surrendered to water, when the ideas of the COMMISSION shall be fully realized. But, were the surface thus occupied to be twice as large, would it be any too much? In the simple light of beauty, what can be more lovely than an ever shifting, always sparkling sheet of water, continually presenting to the eye a new and varying charm? We weary of the monotony of green fields and smoothly shaven lawns, and become satiated, after a while, with the profuse wealth of flowers and blooming shrubs. But who tires of gazing upon an element whose variety is as infinite, as its beauties have ever been beyond description in prose and poesy? The COMMISSION, in developing *Elm Park*, have kept in view its surroundings. For a mile and a half it is a conspicuous object from *Park Avenue*, over which travel, even now frequent,

will ere long become incessant. What fairer vision could meet the eye, in Summer heats, than a succession of pools, of irregular and varying outline, whose flashing and pellucid waters should invigorate and refresh by their very aspect? What pleasure, in Winter, to behold the icy surface of these pools occupied by children of small or "larger growth," who are thus enabled to store up health, while, at the same time, they enjoy themselves free from apprehension of ever imminent peril? These pools are thronged, upon propitious occasions, by the boys and girls of the present Worcester. Will they be any too extensive for the crowd that may be expected to seek fresh air and exhilarating exercise when our population has swollen to a hundred thousand? Drainage has reclaimed the broad acres over whose frozen overflow the writer, with his youthful comrades, was accustomed to skate when yet there were but three thousand inhabitants in Worcester. With such an experience, in an ordinary life-time, is there much danger of exaggerating the provision that should be made for a possible, nor very remote, future?

Some exertion has been used in the maintenance of a clear surface for skating. So far, ordinary success is claimed, although much trouble is caused by boys and girls who will not keep away, when even their little feet leave imprints in the half congealed slush. But it is such a pleasure to behold the enjoyment of the children, who turn out in numbers that appear to represent all sections of the city and every condition in life; that the COMMISSION grow more anxious with each recurring year to preserve the ice in service. And still there are discouragements! The day after Christmas was bitter cold; but the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION was not thereby prevented from attempting to clear the ice of the snow that fell during the night previous. He succeeded in making skating possible; and found his reward, the next morning, in the prostrate trunk of a cut-leaved weeping birch (*Betula incisa pendula*), whose shapely proportions inadequately represented its first cost, and the subsequent care that it had exacted to rear. It lay where it was fractured, of no use to anybody, and a mute witness to the slothful recklessness of a boy, who, too lazy to take off his



skates, caught hold of the first thing within reach, however brittle, in the effort to keep from falling. But a few nights later an equally fine specimen of Wier's cut-leaved maple (*Acer Dasycarpum*, var. *Wierii Laciniatum*) was mutilated, if not wholly ruined, in a spot to which a person must have gone intentionally, out of the usual way, and bent upon malicious mischief. Now, what shall be done in such cases? The snow might be suffered to lie where it falls; which, though Cent-Pinch would approve, simply punishes the innocent with the guilty. Or, were less energy and time squandered in arresting the unlicensed sale of lager beer, more might be exerted beneficially for the adequate protection of public property and grounds. Proficiency in games of calculation or chance can only be attained by constant practice and keen vigilance. But even success at draughts may be purchased too dearly,—by excision of a popular draught at the tap, or by the loss, as in the examples specified, of a growth that requires three years for its peculiar development,\* and for which, fatally retarded, there can be no recovery or resurrection. Malicious or wanton mischief should be prevented. If this is impossible (which ought not to be assumed gratuitously at a police headquarters), the sternest penalty should be exacted after conviction. Homœopathy will not answer where a tree is wantonly stripped of its bark. It will not pay to excoriate the offender according to the latest price current for such peltry. "Skunk hides, the last year, were worth from \$1.75 to \$2.00 each. They will not be worth much more than half as much this year." It may thus be seen that the woe must be unto those through whom the offence cometh, because it is offensive; and not from a more or less fragrant anticipation of gain through the tanned hides of offenders.

The *City Marshal*, in his final Report for A. D. 1879, states to the *Honorable Council*, that the Licenses of Dogs to exist should be issued from the Police Department; to which, in return, the fees for such Licenses should enure. The views of

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\* In the case of the *Betula incisa pendula*, its conspicuous white bark is not manifest under three years.



the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, upon this whole canine matter have been often and freely stated, and they have not changed with the lapse of time. For every license that the *Marshal* will grant, for the sake of the fee, this COMMISSION would withhold ten. For each unlicensed cur the Police would suffer at large, unmolested;—this COMMISSION would slay a hecatomb upon the altar of reasonable security to life, and property, and with due regard for common decency. Indeed, some summary measures will have to be adopted, or there must be a stop to any further efforts to adorn the Public Grounds. With the first advent of spring, a horde of dogs are suffered to run riot, unaccompanied and unchecked by their owners. This COMMISSION might, and may yet have to, apply the shot-gun as a sedative for those exuberant natures; but the howl from the careless owner would be louder than the animal yelp. Yet the public property must be protected; and this COMMISSION will not shrink from the discharge of their whole duty in the premises. Flowers and plants are cultivated for the enjoyment of the people. They are not planted for a target, nor that each stray cur, in rapid succession, may apply a blistering lotion. This COMMISSION fail to appreciate the logic of the Marshal. A major portion of the life of the municipal\* Dog is dissipated upon the Public Grounds. Most of his curious antics are there enacted; and it is generally, in those frequented places, that his polygamous unions are sealed. Indeed, so notoriously has the “Common” been thus rendered “unclean,” that the very bottomers cried out in jealous deprecation.

The experience of the COMMISSION will scarcely warrant the general opinion of the longevity of the Goose. As an ornament to the Pools in *Elm Park*, for

The tame (?) goose, in motion,  
Is a very pretty notion.

their advent was encouraged. Wonted to their new haunts, they soon become the petted playthings of mothers, who sought

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\*Licensed by the City; and municipal—*ex vi termini*.

amusement for their children; and an attraction for children, whose direst affliction was quickly felt to be upon those not infrequent days when rain, or an outbreak of the old Adam, enforced privation of their favorite outing. But it has been found extremely difficult to maintain the Water-Fowl in undiminished number. Some were curiously translated; and others must be accounted for by dogs, who "could not have killed them, you see, because they (the dogs) were securely fastened"—*the day before!* The loss of those which had been translated was more than made good by the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION, who procured, at his private expense, a trio each of White China Geese and Pekin Ducks. Later in the season, *Dr. Joseph N. Bates* presented the COMMISSION with a very fine pair of pure-bred Toulouse Geese, for which official gratitude was not expressed heretofore, that it might be conveyed thus publicly. Offers of other contributions to the stock of Water-Fowl have been casually made, by different persons, who may rest assured that their gifts will be welcomed as indicative of their private interest in the work of the COMMISSION; and of their desire to do aught that is within their power, individually, to augment the attractions of the *Park*.

If the people of Worcester want and would have this, that, or the other; and you may put your own emphasis on the other; they can find the idea evolved from the inner consciousness of this COMMISSION. But,—for the practical realization, they must dive into their pockets. No more now than ever—despite the plethora of charlatans or the blare of in-science, can man "gather grapes of thorns," or make a silk purse from a sow's ear. "In the sweat of thy brow!"—how easily it is forgotten, not alone at the Stock-Board or upon "the Street!" Nevertheless the game is worth the candle. Our citizens visit Boston and return vociferous in their praises of its Public Garden. But the people of Boston, when they made up their minds to dance, knew also that the piper must be paid.

Chicago has almost completed a superb system of Parks—Land, and Water; connected by magnificent stretches of stately Avenues, already partially shaded, and destined, in the near future, to be thoroughly protected from torrid heat by judicious

planting. As in the case of the New York *Central Park*, the increased valuation of the proximate territory will soon repay the cost of those improvements, considerable though it be. And, that it may be repaid, the men who cast their bread upon the waters, in those thriving cities, do it without reservation. They complete what they commence. As the new business, upon each mile of railway that is extended, helps to swell the aggregate traffic, so do the use and enjoyment of Public Grounds, and broad Avenues, contribute to local comfort and diffuse the good report of a community. It will not do; in these latter days of keen competition, to lag in the rear or fall behind our eager rivals in the race for supremacy. Worcester has some natural advantages: but, then too, she lacks many. And it is only by making the most of those that are hers confessedly — the blended charms of Land, and Water scape; artificial, when necessary, if you have only

*Ars celare artem;*

that a present vantage can be retained, or a step taken forward. But are we thus wisely audacious? One or two miles of *Lake Avenue* to attest the sagacity and energy of one man, whose stamp is not even yet effaced from our highways, after years of comparative neglect. It were idle to waste space and time in the stale dispute over the precise location of that Avenue:—whether it could not have been carried, with advantage, around the head of this bay or over that projecting point. It was only decreed under the spell of strategy; and must needs be constructed, if at all, subject to the hard stress of a rigid and relentless parsimony. Completed to Lincoln Street, northward, according to the recorded plans,—it would facilitate travel, accelerate intercourse between extreme sections of the city, and multiply manifold the benefits of the work erstwhile finished.

And so of *Park Avenue*, which has repaid many times its cost in the saving of transportation enabled by it, across the chord that subtends, instead of over the arc which encompasses. Hay, wood, brick, and stone—every species of forage, and all kinds of building material—find easy access to all portions of

the western part of the city, over a roadway that was built and, with even ordinary precaution, could be made, to last. Thoroughly constructed (thanks to Rufus Carter, in an eminent degree); broad enough for any amount of travel; easy for traction; this noble thoroughfare is suffered to remain unfinished. Opened out, upon the same scale, to the intersection of Leicester by Stafford Streets, its utility would be developed beyond any possible present estimate. Prosecuted, as the exigencies of the Highway Department\* should allow, the work might be conducted with facility, economy, and without needless interference with inevitable duties. The employment of labor in building roads is no burden upon a community, *if only the labor is its own!* When it can be employed, as in this case, to complete a work which will supply a broad and uninterrupted thoroughfare from Northville to New Worcester, it seems strange that there should be a moment's hesitation. Gravel lies in large and contiguous mounds along that route. Labor is abundant and eager to be employed. The opportunity presses as material prospects look brighter. What more propitious occasion to resume and accomplish a great public improvement, that was only checked by the harsh duress of a broadcast private calamity. The direct coöperation of those immediately concerned has been promised heretofore, and cannot now be withheld—as, indeed, of men who were never yet found blind to their own advantage. And against distrust that is reasonable, prudence invents or finds its own adequate and timely safeguards.

Consider for an instant! Multifold and great enterprises have been assumed, conducted, and finished, in our City, during the last lustrum, although many branches of business were, at the same time, inert or unprofitable. Foster *Street* has been opened,—valueless or otherwise, as each may elect for himself.

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\* In the judgment of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, the Highway Department should always be so efficiently equipped that, like the Fire Department, its exigencies should be its opportunities. It could scarcely require extraordinary capacity to organize a corps of oxen, horses and tried and trusty men, that might, in a relatively brief space of time, and at a most moderate expense, make "all roads lead to Rome,"—even if they built wiser than they knew. E. W. L.

Reservoirs have been swept away and new ones substituted and the wreck of substance can scarcely be traced where, but a few years since, the wild waste of waters poured so resistlessly. That momentous undertaking,—from a mere inception of which so many men of approved courage and judgment shrank appalled,—the Island Sewer;—now completed; offers in its massive proportions and positive endurance, a proud monument to the sagacity and ability of its projectors and builders. Brake-men are useful, doubtless; but it is the engineer who runs the train. Now the expense of these works has been heavy, beyond question; and, in individual cases, possibly oppressive. But there is little public gain without some private sacrifice: and, in this instance of the Island Sewer, the general benefit incalculably predominates. Yet how small a portion of the sum lavished upon that Sewer would suffice to extend Lake, and Park *Avenues*! How much less, or more even, than was expended in the very judicious repair and widening of Mill *Street*, would it cost to complete Park *Avenue* to its legitimate and obvious intersection with Leicester and Stafford *Streets*. When done, all will wonder that it was ever retarded; or that there should have been the slightest hesitation about finishing it. For no one will then be blind to that which is even now plainly evident to some;—that Worcester will have acquired a superb thoroughfare,—bisecting its territory from North to South;—sweeping in its curves, yet of direct radius; and so nearly level that water is perplexed in determining its grades. Would any skeptic be convinced of its value for purposes of traffic? Let him witness, like the writer, its constant and heavy use! Would another dispute its worth as an absolute attraction to our City? Let such take his stand, at any point of intersection, and count the teams conveying their happy loads, of both sexes and every age, all renewing their youth and inhaling new energies from their invigorating contact with the living forces of Nature!

“And God said, Let there Light; and there was light.” The might of Omnipotence is not in us,—to evolve order from chaos at our simple volition. Nevertheless, we are created sufficiently

like our Maker to be able, in the ordinary exercise of our faculties, to fulfill the command that enjoins us to

“Prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight. \* \* \*

“Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth.” \* \* \*

“And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

Or we can go out and bury the talent committed to us. Worcester is in our possession,—to make or mar. But time fights ever against us; repeating no lost or forfeited opportunities, and, like the Sibyl, exacting an enhanced price in proportion as we neglect our chances.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN.

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

January 26th, A. D. 1880.

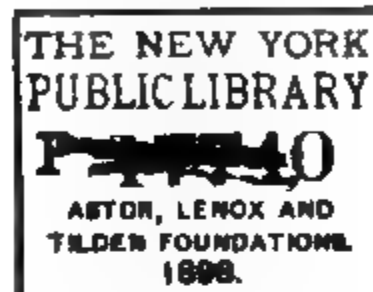
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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

— OF —



# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

# CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1880.

WORCESTER, MASS.:

PRESS OF BLANCHARD & WILSON,

No 199 FRONT STREET





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

— OF —

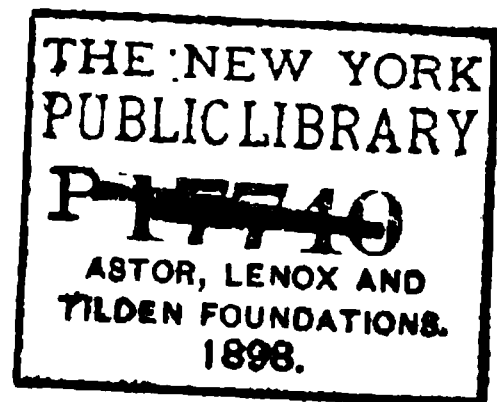
# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

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No. 199 FRONT STREET.

444



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

# COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable City Council.*

THE COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, as required by the Twenty-first Section of the Municipal Charter, submit a "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same," during the official year which terminated with the thirtieth day of November, A. D., 1880. That those acts and doings may be fully comprehended, it became essential to incorporate, in the Report, a number of communications addressed to the City Council, &c., &c., as occasion demanded. Space is thereby consumed; but in no other way could a complete statement be made, which should conform closely to the exactness and spirit of that Twenty-first Section.

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

In Account with CITY OF WORCESTER.

. Cr.

By appropriation for current year, . . . . .	\$5,000 00
" special " " North Walk of Common, . . . . .	576 00
Amount refunded, (blacksmithing,) . . . . .	30
	<hr/>
	\$5,576 30

There is also on hand, subject to the order of the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, a "Diploma for Lilies and Gladiolus," which was awarded at the late fair of the New England Agricultural Society.

*Per Contra. Dr.*

Labor, during the year, . . . . .	\$2,215 96
Hire of teams, with men, . . . . .	239 25
Trees, planting, and trimming, . . . . .	880 45
Tools hardware, and repairs, . . . . .	79 39
Grass-seed and fertilizers, . . . . .	70 20
Loam and manure, . . . . .	245 70
Printing Report, . . . . .	24 59
Import duties, freight, &c., . . . . .	61 50
Water pipe and laying same, . . . . .	61 69
Stationery, \$5.08, paving, \$9.25, . . . . .	14 33
Excavation at 25 cts. per yard, . . . . .	1,083 73
Engineer department: measurements, . . . . .	24 68
Repairing Soldiers' Monument, . . . . .	29 00
Carpenters: lumber, . . . . .	10 10
Food for water-fowl, . . . . .	13 25
Brick walk on north side of Common, . . . . .	516 00
	<hr/>
	\$5,569 82
	<hr/>
Balance transferred to Sinking Fund, . . . . .	\$6 48

THE COMMON,—that most ancient of our *Public Grounds*, has been maintained in its usual condition. Until Police-Officers can be detailed to the especial duty, it will be hopeless to expect that encroachment upon the grass lawns can be prevented. That encroachment is wanton, as any one can see for himself, by watching the devious course of those who ordinarily practice it. There are foot-paths enough; and a vast majority of our population confine themselves therein, in their daily walks. Doing so,—they rely upon the Police to constrain others, too perverse or mulish to go aright, in the way that they should go. The decent and orderly, who love neatness and beauty, constituting as they do the bulk of the community, have a right to feel aggrieved when the mischievous, or reckless, are suffered to disfigure what would otherwise be a tasteful landscape. A

lawn, with its edges frayed and ragged; whose corners and angles are worn off by the continual trespass of the heedless or impatient; must sooner or later become an offence. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS renew their appeal to the public, heretofore often urged, to insist that due restraint shall be put upon those who constantly mar the work of improvement; and who, if left unchecked, will speedily reduce the COMMON to its former condition, when its very mention was a by-word and a reproach.

Early in the official year, petitions, respectably and fully signed, were addressed to the *Honorable Council*, asking for Brick or Plank Walks along and across the COMMON. These were referred to the Highway Committee, by which they were reported back, in due course, with the recommendation of their reference to this COMMISSION. The matter, which had already occasioned much thought, required time for full reflection, now that a decision was invited. After the COMMISSION had matured their judgment, it was at once communicated to the *Honorable Council*. As the consequent construction of a Brick Walk, upon the North front of the COMMON, became a theme for grumbling, at the last Municipal Election, among a few chronic malignants; and because this COMMISSION elect to assume the entire responsibility that may properly attach to them; the note conveying their conclusion is herewith submitted for wider intelligence, and incorporated in this Report:—

#### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

*To the Honorable City Council.*

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to whom were referred the Petitions of H. G. Taft, et als., for a sidewalk upon the North side of the COMMON 'suitable for use the entire year,' would respectfully report that, in their opinion, the request is reasonable; asking nothing more than is proper under the exigencies of the case. Thus viewed,—the COMMISSION take no exception to the fact that the Petitions were not addressed to

themselves, as in strict right they should have been. The Petitions state that, for 'five' [5] months of the year, that 'side-walk is almost impassable.' Nothing is gained by exaggeration. The last winter was of unusual mildness, so that the frosts of night were followed by the thaws of noonday. Ordinarily, the ground, once frozen, would stay so; and when frozen, the Petitioners would not, in all likelihood, claim that a Brick, or Plank-Walk might be harder or better.

Nevertheless the prayer of the petition is reasonable; for what has been may recur, and no one can predict the character of the seasons. The Petitioners form but a small portion of that large and increasing population that pass to and from the Union Passenger Station. Were it merely for the accommodation of strangers, it would be a sound policy to supply the best facilities for access to our marts of industry and merchandise. The COMMISSION believe that the *Honorable Council* will yet review their action of former years, in contracting the side-walk, upon the North side of Front Street, to such a narrow extreme. It never can be inopportune, nor too late, to repair the error of a "haste that made waste," alike of the shade-trees of the city and of the customary ways of its people. That side will ever be warmer in winter, and of course, simply from that fact, can be far cheaper and easier relieved from ice and snow. Still, that is no reason why there should not be a good side-walk upon the Common. And such a walk the COMMISSION cannot promise to maintain, no matter what the season, by the mere use of gravel or sand, as heretofore.

An estimate, from the office of the City Engineer, puts the cost of a Brick side-walk, upon the North side of the Common, at Five Hundred and Seventy-six Dollars, [\$576.00]; of Plank, at Two Hundred and Fifty-nine Dollars, [\$259.00.] A walk of Plank, it is always understood, would be in use during the inclement season, to be carted, put down, taken up, and stored away, involving the cost and trouble of cartage with occasional refitting and repair.

As granting the prayer of the Petitions will necessitate an appropriation of money, the whole matter is returned to the

*Honorable Council* that it may decide whether, to make such appropriation, or not. It has been suggested that a portion of the sum derived from licensing the sale of liquors, might be thus applied. Perhaps no better use could be made of that money than with it to stay the steps of the unwary.

The COMMISSION have also considered the Petition of Baker & Ellis, *et als.*, for a Plank-walk over the Path across the Common, from Salem Square to the City Hall; and find, from figures furnished by the City Engineer, that the cost of such a Walk would be Two Hundred and Ninety-Three Dollars, [\$293.00]. And it is added, for the information of the Honorable Council, that the expense of a Brick Walk, between the same points, is computed at Six Hundred and Fifty Dollars, [\$650.00.] The COMMISSION hold similar opinions, in each of these cases, as to the propriety of the requests. But, while they would do, or say, nothing to hinder the Honorable Council from appropriating the sums needful for the construction of either, or both, of these Side-Walks; they do not refrain from expressing their conviction that they can put, and keep, the walk across the Common in satisfactory condition, for yet another year, with the material already in hand and designed for that purpose.

The Petitions and accompanying papers, in each of the cases, are herewith returned.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN.

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASS., September, A.D., 1880.

In all work upon the Public Grounds, one fact must be borne in mind,—there can be no assessment for betterments. The people are improving their own property: and that very improvement is the betterment. That fashionable form of confiscation, whereby we try to cheat ourselves into the faith that at

least so much has been saved, neither has, nor can be made to have, application to our Common and Park. No man can lift himself by his waist-band, in the Public Grounds of Worcester.

Should Front Street be paved, as advised by His Honor, the Mayor, some method will have to be adopted to retain the North Walk of the Common. Then would seem to be the time to put down the kerb-stone like that which limits and adorns the North line of Park Street. The old kerb, employed elsewhere, would by so much reduce the cost of substitution.

The condition of Salem Square, legitimately a portion of the Common, is elsewhere considered. The views of the COMMISSION cannot be misunderstood. It has been intimated that, were Salem Square, so called, to be restored to the Common, there would be no place convenient for Artillery-salutes that would be within the jurisdiction of the Mayor and Aldermen, or of the Honorable Council. To which it might be a sufficient answer that there is nothing in the history, or traditions, of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to warrant a suspicion that they would repress the manifestations of patriotism, or even its exuberance. Some of them have tested their pockets, at times, when the City Council inclined to consider the firing of cannon, upon the Fourth of July, as a waste. The prediction of John Adams will ever be regarded as a sacred injunction, by the COMMISSION; recalling with fond pride that he was a fellow-townsmen, before he became a founder of the Republic.

The Commission have formerly suggested the construction of a *Fet d' Eau*, upon the Common,—transversely on a line from the City Hall to the Union Passenger Station. Recognizing the deplorable deficiency of Water; and knowing that such an improvement can await the completion of others which are more urgent; they simply refer to the subject now, to show that it has not been forgotten. Whensoever the Honorable Council shall determine, by an appropriation for the purpose, that the time has arrived for the construction of a Fountain, or *Fet d' Eau*, as proposed, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS will be found ready to avail themselves of such liberality.



Comparative good order was secured upon the COMMON and in ELM PARK throughout the latter part of the year. Turbulence and occasional violations of decency, early in the season, obliged the COMMISSION to solicit the intervention of the Mayor and Aldermen:

*To The Honorable Mayor and Aldermen:—*

The provisions of the charter, which confer upon the COMMISSION of PUBLIC GROUNDS the "sole care, superintendence and management" of the Public Grounds belonging to "said City of Worcester;" and which empower the COMMISSION to "make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust," etc., etc., fail to specify or supply any means whereby such "by-laws and regulations" may be enforced. Complaint is daily brought to the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION, by persons of either sex and of every age, that offences against decency, both in gesture and language, have become so frequent and rank as to prevent people of ordinary sensibility from crossing or frequenting the Public Grounds. The COMMISSION have cherished a persistent, if faint, hope, that at some time, whether from a diminution of offences against the public peace, assumed to be of greater enormity, or because of an increase in the police force, a remedy might be found and applied to this disgraceful state of things. The police force has been increased, and a *minimum* of crime requiring repression, or punishment, may reasonably be inferred from the fact that a certain proportion of the officers are weekly furloughed. It appears, therefore, to the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS to be a fitting time to ask that the *Mayor and Aldermen* will be pleased to direct the detail of one or more officers to each of the COMMONS, or PARKS, of the city; to the end that "lewd fellows of the baser sort," may no longer be suffered to lie prone upon the seats, or ground, of such COMMONS or PARK; nor allowed to taint the air of heaven, and vex the ears of modesty by the uninterrupted belch of profanity and smut. If even now, with augmented numbers, the Police are not sufficient for this duty, it is respectfully submitted

that extra men might be employed; their compensation to be defrayed from the sums saved to the City, by reason of the vacations taken by the existing Force. This precise time is just that in which the COMMONS or PARKS most require supervision. The COMMISSION of PUBLIC GROUNDS, who cannot find leisure for vacations, believe that they have only to arrest the attention of the *Honorable* MAYOR and ALDERMEN to ensure a change for the better. At worst, they will have vindicated themselves from the mistrust of those of their fellow-citizens who are prone to suspect that if there was a will, there would be found a way, to restrain or punish obscenity, whether of posture or utterance, within the Public Grounds. What the COMMISSION can do, of their own volition and unassisted, that they do with their might. But in this matter they are powerless.

Very respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASS., June 14, A. D., 1880.

As a result of this appeal officers were detailed to preserve order on Sundays and holidays. No serious trouble is known to have occurred, or been threatened, thereafter, save possibly in a single instance where the fortunate presence of the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION frightened a young scamp from further insult. But, with the increase of its attractions, and in proportion as it is developed, ELM PARK becomes more and more a place of resort. All have the same right to frequent it; and it is inevitable that with the multitude of inoffensive and quiet citizens here and there will intrude the disorderly and obscene. The COMMISSION are of opinion that the time has come when an officer should be stationed, constantly, either upon the PARK or within close hail of it; in order that women and children may feel as safe when visiting the Public Grounds of the City, as though they were in the seclusion of their own homes. The

expense would not be great; but whatever it might be, a large majority of the tax-payers will insist that it be incurred.

The recent *Revision of the Ordinances*, of the City, so openly and widely published that even the "lame, halt and blind" might be held to cognizance of them, was of especial moment to this COMMISSION. The Paths, or Foot Walks of the Public Grounds, of ELM PARK in particular, were devised and therefore constructed for the accommodation of pedestrians exclusively. Surrounded as that PARK and the COMMON are by roads of exceeding width, there was no evident need of furnishing a way for persons in carriages or mounted. Yet it has been found that there are sufficient attractions in ELM PARK to induce carelessness or oblivion of Section 1, Chapter 36, of that Revision,—wherein it is "*Ordained* that no person shall ride, lead, or drive any horse in or upon any inclosed Public Grounds of the City of Worcester, except by the permission of the Commission of Public Grounds and Shade Trees." Conscious of the actual annoyance, and desiring to remedy it while there was yet time, the COMMISSION sought and obtained an opinion of the City Solicitor as to the legal effect of the word "inclosed," just cited. None knew better than themselves that to the COMMISSION had the Charter entrusted the "sole care, superintendence and management of the Public Grounds belonging to said City of Worcester." But the Ordinances of the City Council have a force of police to impart to them a persuasive influence; while the "Rules" that the COMMISSION are empowered to establish must depend, largely, for acceptance upon a general faith in the muscle of the COMMISSIONERS. The claim to co-ordinate authority might be resisted, when necessary; until it grew inconsistent with the legitimate functions of the COMMISSION, its exercise was of positive benefit. And the Solicitor was clear that ELM PARK, for example, is "inclosed," within the intent and for every purpose of the Ordinance. The COMMISSION, therefore, give notice that strict compliance with the municipal prohibition will be expected and required for these adequate reasons:

1st, because it is civic law;

2d, because the paths are intended and reserved for pedestrians;

3d, because it is cleaner, and far cheaper, to buy manure by the cord, than to collect it with a post-hole spoon at the tail of every horse that may be driven in, fouling the walks; and

4th, and finally, for the reason that now, as of old, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; and the soundness or strength of a principle can in nowise be so well vindicated as by its impartial application.

• Nor is Section 7, Chapter 47, of inferior interest, or less direct bearing: No person shall dig up, injure or destroy any ornamental or shade tree, shrub or vine, growing and being in any of the streets or highways, or on any of the Public Lands of said City without the consent of the Commissioners of Public Grounds and Shade Trees, first obtained therefor in writing.” Ordinances are not self-executing; and long before the Revision was completed, the COMMISSION were compelled to address the City Council:

*To the Honorable City Council:*

The Commission of Public Grounds are advised by the City Solicitor that the following “Order,” unanimously adopted by the City Council and approved by the Mayor, A. D., 1877, lapsed and became void January 1, A. D., 1878:

CITY OF WORCESTER: *In City Council, May 7, 1877.*

*Ordered:*—That the Mayor be, and he hereby is authorized, in behalf of the City to offer a reward of fifty dollars (\$50) to any party or parties who shall furnish the evidence which shall lead to the conviction of any person or persons who shall willfully mutilate or destroy any shade tree planted by the City or individuals upon any of the public streets or grounds, thereof.

May 9, 1877. Approved.

CHAS. B. PRATT,  
*Mayor.*

The evil practices which that order was designed to meet, check, and if possible remedy, were never more rampant than now. Complaints have reached this COMMISSION, and causes of complaint are notorious to some of the *Honorable Council*. Wherefore it is respectfully suggested, should it commend itself to your better judgment, that the order of A. D. 1877, be revived. And, if thought expedient, this COMMISSION would be gratified were the scope of the order extended, so as to include

all those who mutilate, destroy, take up' or carry away any ornamental or flowering shrub, plant or vine, or any part of the same, etc., etc. For, and in behalf of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASS., May 3, A. D., 1880.

That order has not yet emptied the City Treasury, although the lively jack-knife of the mischievous lad vies with the ravening jaws attached to the market or milk wagon. Many well-founded complaints were lodged in the proper quarters; but, so far, none have got before the District Court. The most recent instance of damage to trees and shrubs within ELM PARK is purposely left in suspense by order of the COMMISSION. The culprits are known, have been scared half out of their reckless wits, and seem to realize the character and extent of their offence. There was no apparent benefit, whether to the City or individuals, in exacting the infliction of a fine which must be collected, ultimately, from innocent parents.\*

There is, however, a system of petty thieving from ELM PARK prevalent among a class of persons who should and doubtless do know better, that cannot be longer tolerated. Too many door-yards and gardens are stocked by their owners or lessees with plants that were but just set out by the COMMISSION. This sort of larceny has grown so inveterate that it excites deep thankfulness when, from any cause, such depredations are less than ordinarily rapacious. A chance geranium or petunia may perhaps suffice in the Spring. But with the first fall of the leaf commences the aggressive inroad which devastates everything, sparing nothing in its ruthless greed. The City has no rights to be respected; and no choice flower or seed is secure from the covetousness of those who are sure that a frost is just about

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\* Since the text was written there has been complaint of mutilation upon several streets, and sad traces of it may be seen in Elm Park, at the foot of the terrace by Newton Hill.  
E. W. L.

to kill the public plants, and would fain save them harmless by—appropriating them! Cannot this be prevented? Judge of the difficulty! It is no crime to stoop over a flower; innocent admiration often takes that form. The *Chairman* of the COMMISSION, or the workmen in the PARK, may observe the attitude sometimes with suspicion. But it is not till they have gone to the spot that they notice the absence of a plant and the freshly disturbed earth. The paper bag forms a handy receptacle, and the customary shawl a ready covering. The moon does not always afford her light, nor has the sun usually appeared above the horizon, when the adept at floral larceny salutes the early bird—hail fellow, well met!

One audacious plunderer must have worked both early and late. The *Chairman* had often noticed, as he came upon the ground, mornings, that the young grass in ELM PARK had been newly cut. None of the workmen had been directed to do it; and, at first, it was not supposed that any one would dare to trespass in a place that is so public. A close watch by Mr. Pike, to whom the grass had been bartered, tended to alter that opinion, and to confirm the old adage that “while the cat’s away, the mice will play.” He was not caught mowing, nor was he seen to load up. But,—it was four o’clock in the morning,—grass was gone that was there at sundown—and his loaded wagon was but vanishing in the distance. It will be unwholesome to repeat such operations in the coming year. Better far that the PARK should be depastured; since some manure would be left; than to suffer its aftermath to be skinned so closely. The COMMISSION never allow their lawn-mowers to be used much after the last week of August. The later, close herbage is the best protection that the roots can have throughout the Winter, and they seem to absorb it as Spring approaches. If a man has beasts which he cannot feed without robbing the Public Grounds, he would do well to get rid of them at once. Let this kindly warning suffice!

Neither is it the green things of the earth only that are coveted. The very bolts and nuts have been stolen from the pump on the Common, rendering it useless; and thereby affording a

pretext for carping at the COMMISSION who had innocently assumed, from the proximity of Police Headquarters, that they might at least enjoy immunity from junk thieves. The motives of their censors are veiled in obscurity. They could not have been troubled because they found no water—to drink! And, although it is true that the element enters into the manufacture of lager beer, there has been no hint that any one connected with the newspaper press, whether local editor or metropolitan correspondent, ever went thirsty of that pleasant beverage because the old town pump got crippled.

Scarcely had the Report of the COMMISSION for A. D., 1879, been transmitted to the Honorable Council than complaint was made that the shade trees along the causeway which spans and spoils Lake Quinsigamond, were wantonly mutilated. Having no force available to avert or arrest damage, the subjoined appeal was addressed to His Honor, the Mayor:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

Feb. 6, A. D., 1880.

*To His Honor Mayor F. H. Kelley:*

Dear Sir—I am informed upon the best of authority\* that the agents of a Telephone Company, in the act of connecting Worcester with Boston, have been (perhaps now are) cutting down shade trees where their convenience is interfered with. This was especially the case along the causeway. This COMMISSION cannot protect the public property. Possibly the Executive Authority of the City may suffice to teach that corporation that, whatsoever privileges it may extract from the General Court, it cannot obtain immunity for lawless mischief.

I remain very respectfully and truly,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

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\*Mr. George S. Coe of Grafton.

In the issue of the *Daily Spy* for August 28, A. D., 1880, it is stated that the "Canadian Courts have decided that Telegraph Companies have no power to destroy or injure Shade Trees. The *employees* of the Dominion Telegraph Company have been fined for such offences." Of course no other decision could be rendered by an honest tribunal. But the hired servants of a rich or overgrown corporation, are apt to share the faults of those by whom they are paid. If the monopoly imagines that it owns the Legislature it is not so strange that the men in its employment should delude themselves with the idea that they are above the law. Now, as the Honorable Council have just given permission for additional wires to be strung along the streets, it appears to the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS but simple justice to caution the Telegraph or Telephone Companies, in advance of actual mischief.\*

The *Shade Trees* of the City have been largely increased in numbers during the past year. Latterly the COMMISSION have adopted, as a fixed policy, the practice of taking a single important Street, with its more salient branches or feeders, and setting it with trees throughout its entire course. In this way it becomes possible to pursue a consistent system, and so to plant that what is done is not only obvious to the eye, but palpable to the sense of comfort. The old system of granting individual requests to have trees set here and there, one in one place, and a half dozen a quarter of a mile away, neither satisfied the applicants nor benefited the public. Under the more recent practice it is apparent to the most careless observer that only time will be wanting to render the whole street shaded; and that he will not have to endure a fervid sun, when he steps from under the branches of trees that he alone had the forethought to provide. The vision of the COMMISSION is keen enough; only

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\*This particular caution will not restore the limbs to the Shade Trees down by the Poor Farm, that Mr. Parkhurst says were cut off by the agents of such a corporation, nor heal their wounds. But, if improved upon by a vigilant Police, it may lead to the application of some of that wholesome instruction so shrewdly taught by Judge Williams in his normal school for beginners. E. W. L.



their purse is not like that of Fortunatus. At the very time when these critics were denouncing the COMMISSION for neglect of Belmont Street for instance, Mr. James Draper had been waiting, for weeks, for the disappearance of the frost, in order to plant along that Street, in accordance with his contract. It would have been a sufficient answer, in deprecation or denial, that Ward *Two* (2) had already more than a proportionate share of Shade Trees. Yet such answer could not emanate from the COMMISSION, who knew, from painful experience, what the sun can do on Belmont Street when Sirius is in the ascendant.

A serious trouble, wherewith the COMMISSION has to contend, is found in the indifference or wantonness of the ruder labor employed by the Highway Department. Oft-times the men engaged in excavating for a kerbstone hack mercilessly at whatever impedes their way; reckless if it be the roots upon which a Shade Tree depends for stability and support. One case was so flagrant that the *Chairman*, under whose direct observation it fell, was constrained to address a note upon the subject, whereof a copy is subjoined in fuller explanation:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

WORCESTER, May 17, 1880.

To *Alderman George P. Kendrick*,

*Chairman of Highway Committee:*

Dear Sir—I came up Elm Street, after leaving you this A. M., and, as I passed the estate of Mr. Jonas H. Clark, found men in the employ of the Highway Department busied hacking off the roots of some of the finest Shade Trees on that street. Their excuse will be that they wished to run a kerbstone without interruption. Waiving the question whether even the Highway Department is authorized to mutilate the *branches* or *roots* of the Shade Trees; (and the City Council have just attempted to stop this evil by offering a large reward), I contend that the damage is wanton. Stop your kerbstone one foot each side of a tree, allowing also a foot for the growth of the tree, and the

City saves one yard of kerb for each tree. The roots of the tree will hold the walk better than any kerb that can be put down.

At any rate I wish to deny the right of any man or men, in the service of the City, without the consent of this COMMISSION, to prune, mutilate, cut down, destroy, or remove any Shade or Ornamental Tree planted along the Public Streets of this City.

Very respectfully and truly,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

It is not intended to convey an impression that the Highway Committee authorize—much more, direct, such wholesale excision. But if the laborers, who are ignorant that the branches of a tree are in exact ratio to its roots, were simply not suffered to extirpate, more trees would survive to attest their forbearance. Were the kerbstone to be omitted where and when trees occur, enough saving would inure to the City to justify this COMMISSION in encircling each tree with an adequate safeguard. As stated in the note to *Alderman* Kendrick, from two to three feet of kerb might be dispensed with, easily. Its cost would be saved, the roots would retain their place, and no one would suffer unless there were, mayhap, some corner or crookedness in the kerbstone market.

The demand for Shade Trees grows continually more importunate. Each applicant, feeling his own need, inclines to magnify the importance of the Street that excites his present interest; and to blame the COMMISSION when his request is not met with what he regards as sufficient promptness. But there are some things which the individual citizen is too apt to overlook. And the most essential of these, overruling indeed in its influence, is the imperative necessity of following, rather than preceding the Highway Department. There is nothing gained, as heretofore explained at length, by planting Shade Trees along streets where the gutter and side-walk have yet to be laid down. This

should not be; for Time subtracts from our lives and reduces our energy. But facts are tolerably stubborn. Wherever it was practicable, and just as rapidly as their means permitted, the COMMISSION have striven to meet, if possible anticipate, the demand for Shade Trees. Our City possesses such an extensive territory, that few can realize the amount of work of this nature that has been achieved. When the trees that have been planted within the last few years shall have attained size, so as to afford shade, the COMMISSION will be justified by the result. It is to be regretted that the cost of suitable guards for the Shade Trees that are set out, puts a supply of them wholly out of the question. Indeed, the COMMISSION are aware of no guard that could be furnished at a reasonable expense, which is at all fit for the purpose. Individuals must do something; and, as they supply the bricks after the City has put down a kerb, so may they properly shield, from casual or malicious harm, the Shade Trees wherewith they are supplied at the public cost.

During the coming season, it is hoped to commence and complete the planting of Grafton Street and Park Avenue; either being of pressing consequence that cannot longer be overlooked.

There are many parcels of land,—not always gores according to the dictionary; since their shape partakes largely of the haphazard that compelled, rather than invited, their formation; at the intersection of important streets, now unimproved and waste; but which, at a moderate expense, might be made pleasant to the casual glance and a source of comfort to the whole vicinage. Under whose jurisdiction they would be found, after legal inquiry, it is impossible to say. The Highway Department, having neglected them so far, must be of the opinion that the case lies within some other purview. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, mindful of the advice of the City Solicitor that the old Burial Ground, along Mechanic Street, could not be considered a Public Ground, have been cautious, ever since, lest they might intrude upon some province of their fellow-citizens,—inanimate or otherwise. Yet their deliberate judgement has been expressed, often enough,—that progressive im-

provement should be the rule of the city;—neither an exception nor a spasm. It will require money, which is sometimes granted reluctantly; it will exact time, which is yielded with more or less willingness, according to the disposition of those who have it to spare; but, more than aught else, must it have, what it cannot in fact do without, taste to discriminate, tact to apply, and zeal to magnify the occasion.

Many of these parcels of land are too small to admit of much development. Where they chance to be of adequate size,—should the *Honorable Council* feel unusually lavish,—it would be practicable and might, once and seldom, be expedient to lay them down to grass, with here and there an occasional tree for shade. The obvious difficulty will be,—that the grass must be constantly cared for to be kept green, since, if not green it will look homely enough; and how to keep it green will be an ever present problem. If the dust upon the streets is kept down there need be no trouble. But, as a rule, the outer-lying streets are not, nor are they likely to be, watered; and, as a consequence, dust will fly and be deposited, until it might require the keen vision of an Arab to determine which was desert,—which oasis! The tribes of the Sahara are not easily accessible; and our own Arabs are not experts in anything green.

Yet, it occurs to the COMMISSION, that the best and most sensible mode of improvement would be,—to erect fountains; improved upon the style of those in the yard of the High-School, for which the City is indebted to private liberality. The flow and sheen of water is ever grateful to the eye; its draught never unwelcome to the tired wayfarer, or weary beast, from whom the natural water-courses have been abstracted, or perverted into sources of offence. Grass plots can be added, if deemed advisable; but for the maintenance of their freshness, water would always be indispensable. And,—the *Jet d' Eau* is, in itself, a thing of beauty; none the less charming that, quenching thirst and allaying fatigue, it blends *utile cum dulci*, after the fashion of those grand old Romans.\* In winter, when

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\*Of their work! Whithersoever Water could be led, *to fall*, thither was it conducted. Where, and at what time, Roads were needed, there and upon the instant

grass would be withered and dead, the fountain, if not in continuous flow, might be transmuted into any fanciful or weird shape that ingenuity could devise; or a liquid element, under extremity of frost, be constrained to assume.

Without attempting to enumerate the many points where, by the intersection of streets, more or less vacant space is left, that should be cared for and improved; this COMMISSION would call the attention of the *Honorable City Council* to a few which are too conspicuous to be left neglected.

COES Square :—At the junction of PARK Avenue with Beaver and Lovell Streets. The widening of PARK Avenue, just ordered, must materially reduce the area of the Square: but the land will remain in the Avenue, where it will be of the most use.

WEBSTER Square :—so well provided for, at present, and with such prospects in a not remote future, that it can well afford to be a patient waiter.

WHITNEY Space :—Where Cambridge and Millbury Streets lock horns with the new Quinsigamond Avenue.

VERNON Space :—at the intersection of Green, Millbury, Vernon, and Water Streets, whereof the importance can be better appreciated, by him who sees the continuous development southward, and throughout the "Island District;" inevitable upon that grand improvement initiated by Stephen Salisbury, *et als*, when they petitioned for the widening of Summer Street.

GRAFTON Space :—Where Grafton and Providence, conjointly with Water and Winter Streets, invite and facilitate access and intercourse to and from the eastern and western sides of Worcester.

Separate and distinct mention should be made of the plot, or tract, of land, now designated "Elm Square," that is understood to be given to the city by Benjamin Thayer and Darius Rice, two of our oldest and worthy citizens. But this COMMISSION have no official knowledge of a conveyance, to whom

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were they made. Their substance may be found to this day. The legionaries were the Highway Department. Might we not learn a profitable lesson, graven indelibly upon the very face of the earth, by the graduates of that oldest of all Normal Schools.—*Senatus Populus-que Romanus?*

made and by whom accepted; with its qualifying conditions if any; nor of a formal dedication to public uses. In utter ignorance if this particular plot is comprised within the PUBLIC GROUNDS; they can only advise the cordial acceptance of all gifts of land, unincumbered with onerous conditions, which, naturally capable of improvement, may be developed as the state of the treasury and the convenience of the COMMISSION shall allow.

Then there are Washington, Salem and Lincoln *Squares*. As regards Salem *Square*, the opinion of this COMMISSION has been expressed too often, to require statement anew. In their Report for A. D., 1879, it was plainly intimated that "Salem *Square* should not longer be tolerated as a public eye-sore. A decent regard should be had for simple appearance, and some consideration manifested for the very respectable religious societies which have there planted their houses of worship. Has not the time come to stop the wood and hay,—matters of indispensable necessity but yet susceptible of regulation,—upon the outskirts of the city; at Lincoln and Webster *Squares*, for instance, where facilities for measuring and weighing already exist. *Then*, a sufficient Street being left open, the remainder of the Square could be restored to the COMMON, from which it was needlessly wrested," &c., &c.

Section 1, Chapter 45, of the Revised Ordinances provides that the "Mayor and Aldermen shall appoint a suitable place or places in the Streets and Squares in the City of Worcester as a stand or stands for the measurement, weight, and sale, of Hay, Straw, Wood, Bark, and Charcoal."

There may be sound reasons why provision shall be made for such merchandize rather than for sugar, or strawberries, apples, or geese. Yet the inquiry arises, and will not down at the first casual bidding:—Is SALEM *Square* now, if it ever was, that "suitable place?" By dedication; through imprescriptible use: and in law, beyond question; it is, as it was ever, a portion of the OLD COMMON *and* TRAINING FIELD. Why not hearken to the remonstrances of the Religious Societies, which object that the senses shall be offended no longer; and protest that

this tract of land, if neglected as Common, should not be cherished as unclean? The recent petition of George C. Whitney, Francis A. Gaskill, *et als.*, brings this subject before you, in all its relations. Hay is largely baled, in these latter days. Why then tolerate loose loads of it, in the heart of the City? Wood, and Coal are dealt in by the same persons. Yet no coal-dealer has sought to become a civic dead-head. But, why not! The plain truth is, that Worcester has outgrown swaddling-clothes; and is only chafed by each new attempt to put it in diapers. Hay, Straw, Wood, &c., have no proper *locus standi*; so long as there is even a pretence of establishing Fire Limits. A Street,—fifty or sixty feet wide, in front of the Meeting-Houses, would afford ample room for traffic or travel. The remainder of that waste, restored to the COMMON, would still remain convenient for public gatherings, artillery salutes, and possibly even for a dress parade of our excellent Light Battery. And it is the deliberate opinion of the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, that there can be found nowhere a better, or more admirable site for a new Gun-House.

Let us leave WASHINGTON and LINCOLN *Squares*, where they can be trusted safely enough, in the hands that have done so much for them in the past. For the former, there is the growth assured from its present momentum, and bright anticipations from the prospective Summer *Street*. Of the latter,—if the *Messrs.* Salisbury cannot say of it as did Augustus with regard to Rome—that they found it of brick and left it of marble—they may at least point to the massive structures which go so far to encompass it; and whereon the legend will be emblazoned, to their honor,—*Ædificaverunt*. Either of those *Squares* is worthy of a noble fountain.

Crossing from BURNCOAT *Space* where there is a useful, if not particularly ornamental watering-trough; crossing too, by a street which should be presented by the Grand Jury, for its perilous character; we find broad, open plots, at the intersection of West Boylston, with Holden, *Streets*; as well as farther South, where Grove *Street* joins PARK AVENUE. The merger of Forest *Street* in the Holden *Road* is not forgotten. Nor is it



deemed worth while to dwell upon the opportunities for improvement, by the authority to which it may pertain, that are offered where Highland, or Pleasant, *Streets*, severally cross PARK AVENUE. Along this whole periphery, and it surrounds the City, there may be discovered, here and there, at intervals of miles, a watering-trough for beasts. If the owner of an animal would quench his thirst, he is presumed to be able to find a Beer Saloon or a Rum Shop. Suppose, however, that it is Winter as now, when everything is frozen solid; and that there is a rigid law of prohibition—enforced! The human being may be trusted to endure—or evade! although thirst is torture. But to the dumb and helpless animal, a similar deprivation, protracted too long, is surely death. What more is needed to demonstrate the imperative want of an adequate supply of Public Water,—to which easy and free access may be furnished, along our thoroughfares; and also copious enough for every purpose and application of beauty.

The COMMISSION have never ceased urging upon the *Honorable Council* the construction of a broad Avenue that should encircle the City. All the Reports prepared by the *Chairman*, during the last decade, have concurred to impress upon the popular mind the permanent benefits of such a far-reaching policy. But three years ago, revealing the hopes of the COMMISSION, he was frank to confess that their fancy pictured the City environed with a broad Avenue, convenient for traffic and pleasant for travel—from which the whole community should derive advantage, and by whose use a keener zest of enjoyment and health should inure to those in possession of sufficient leisure. ‘It is given unto men to see visions and to dream dreams; yet it is vouchsafed to few to behold their realization. But the COMMISSION, from their constant engagement upon the PUBLIC GROUNDS, have been permitted to look upon the line of traction prolonged over PARK AVENUE, as its facilities for the passage of heavy freight became better understood. To the man confined rigidly to Main Street, who can take no cognizance of anything that transpires off that great thoroughfare, this AVENUE, may appear but an unprofitable investment. To that same



man, after the cares of the day are over, that AVENUE will afford new life as, in due proportion, he inhales the exhilaration of motion and the oxygen of the atmosphere. Built wide, for common convenience; thoroughly built, for public comfort; built as flat as might be and allow the flow of surface water, nor spoiled, as are too many road-beds, by the conceited ignorance which would substitute the hemisphere for its plane; it stretches out along the western edge of the City,—a constant pleasure to its original advocates and a singular fascination for its irrational foes. Its immediate extension to the intersection of Leicester, with Stafford, *Streets*, is a measure of public policy which should be conceded to that numerous body of petitioners who so fully represent the wealth and intelligence of Webster *Square*. The route is short;—the materials are upon the spot; the labor is waiting. The time to do a thing which is inevitable, is that time when it can be done to the best advantage. And the completion of a work that is both inevitable and expedient, cannot be delayed long without incurring a responsibility that no servant of the People should covet.'

When, therefore, opportunity for action offered, the COMMISSION could not be expected to show themselves dilatory. There was a chance of opening-up and beautifying the larger moiety of the city; a reasonable prospect of carrying out a plan that had been their dearest wish, for years. Actuated by such feelings the *Chairman* 'evolved from his inner consciousness' an argument in behalf of the petition of John Dean, *et als.*, which is here inserted; partly, because of requests to that effect; but more,—since it met with favor, at the time; and is reputed to have had decisive weight in influencing the final decision.

*To the Honorable the MAYOR and ALDERMEN.*

Indulge me in a prelude, after a recent fashion?

It is sometimes objected to petitions for the construction or extension of roads, whereof PARK AVENUE is but a single, if marked, feature, that they are but the request of those who own horses!

Most assuredly such persons are likely to make use of the Public Streets: an easement, however, which by no means precludes their enjoyment by asses. But the law does not yet prohibit the ownership of a horse, nor make the fact a misdemeanor. And the idea has even occurred to the writer that, were the property of those who own, or use horses, to be eliminated, an assessment upon the remaining valuation would yield but a scant revenue for ordinary purposes, and certainly not warrant the luxury of ample Turtle for this *Honorable Board*.

And now, let me ask *His Honor* and the *Aldermen* to examine with me, a map of the City. Here is Main Street, at Lincoln Square. To the west Harvard Street, commencing from Highland, is lost in a right angle at Bowdoin; or, under the *alias* of Chestnut, comes to an abrupt end at Pleasant Street. Farther on, West Street, beginning from Salisbury, descends a difficult hill; and closes a profitable course, also at Pleasant Street. Still farther—Fruit, and Sever—of goodly proportions and promise from Highland to Elm; narrow thenceforward and get a devious outlet through Chandler or Piedmont Streets. And then Agricultural Street, last of all, commencing at Sunnyside and running south; here thirty (30) feet, there eighty (80) or, at Russell, but forty (40); and finally stopped short in that pestilential district, whose deadly miasma has not ceased to envelope the Jaques Hospital-lot *since* that philanthropist died!

Not one of those Streets is direct; not one that does not trend east of south as it nears its termination. They supply a useful narrow-guage for local convenience. But, for the future Worcester, something more capacious and direct is imperatively required.

In the boyhood of him who now asks your attention to a matter, in his judgment of vital consequence to the permanent welfare of Worcester, the travelled way of Main Street was equal in width to the strip of greensward that extended throughout its entire length upon either side. Over that travelled way the Boston and Hartford stage-coaches; the meat-cart of *Capt. Burnett*; or the occasional load of wood brought in by some farmer to exchange with *Deacon Butman* for rum and molasses;

sufficed to denote that a right of passage existed, and that it was used. Otherwise the Street was surrendered to those of us who were interested in games of tag or single cat; with the unwritten, but yet recognized, law that we must keep out of the way of *Dr. Green's* gig, when bearing that most excellent physician on his missions in aid of the village census. At that time *Main Street* was understood to be six (6) rods wide; although, (as subsequently learned) no metes and bounds existed to indicate such limits. To what degree that Breadth has been reduced, by encroachments or otherwise, this *Honorable Board* is painfully aware. That the roadway is none too spacious at the City Hall; and becomes wholly inadequate above *FRANKLIN Square*; you do not now learn for the first time. The trouble must increase with the growth of the City. What possible relief can be devised, save that which is obvious, in the diversion from *Main Street* of all travel and transit that does not belong to it, and only seeks it of necessity.

Fifty years ago it was commonly assumed that the distance between the Salisbury mansion and the old red farm house, due west; as also between Judge Paine's house, at the foot of *Pleasant Street* and the old red gate at the southeasterly declivity of Newton Hill, was, in either case, a mile. Throughout that entire territory, from Northville to New Worcester, there was not, until the construction of *PARK AVENUE*, any way of getting through the City, from north to south, save by *Main Street*. Of slight consequence once, can you not realize of what serious inconvenience this difficulty of transit has become, to that great and growing population upon and beyond the ridge west of *Main Street*? It is like telling us to double our journey, to send us to Webster Square, or Northville, through *Main Street*. And besides,—*Main Street* suffers from the encumbrance of a Horse Railway, with its tracks and switches. Looking back to note the encroachments that have so restricted our chief thoroughfare, I come here, with the other Petitioners, to ask you to continue *PARK AVENUE* of uniform width, throughout its entire length; in the firm belief that you can, in no other way, so cheaply and effectually promote the best interests of Worcester.

You may object that the road-way need not be so wide. But it is ever excess for which the wise legislator must provide, and whose exigencies he must, if possible, anticipate. The dam that will not resist a flood, is useless; no matter how effectually it may restrain the water at its usual stage. It is not sufficient that the arch should allow the passage of a stream, if it obstructs that stream when swollen into a torrent. March the General of the Army, and the Vice-President of the Republic, around that way to the Agricultural Grounds, next September, and see if sixty (60) feet between kerbs is extravagant!

Or, it may be urged against the prayer of the Petition, that there need be no hurry. That there are other matters of more pressing public moment; and that when the crowd blocks the way will be the time to provide more room. But, as in the flagrant case of *Main Street*, metes and bounds get effaced or lost. Encroachments contract the actual road-way, and usurp sanction, by the lapse of years and memory. Abutters take possession of ground that has awaited your tardy action to be included within the street. So that when delay becomes no longer tolerable; you are confronted by an array of opponents, and a schedule of prospective damages, that may well exact hesitation or denial. No! in the terse phrase of Methodism, *now* is the accepted time! Adopt your Decree! and, for its execution, avail yourselves of the forces of the Highway Department, at its convenience, and when disengaged. Construct it,—after the decree,—in summer or winter; when no other work oppresses; when it can be done cheapest, because you have nothing else to do; and done best, because labor would otherwise be idle.

The Petitioners are neither enemies to Worcester nor foes to her growth. Some of them have watched the expansion of a small country village into a city, whose prominence is not the least significant sign in the development of a model Commonwealth. With few natural advantages, at the outset; with none, but that of a central location, that were not immeasurably surpassed by those of her more remote or immediate rivals within the County; we enjoy the Worcester of to-day, as she has been fashioned by the wit of man. And there is pith in the old say—

ing.—What man has done, man may do! What our fathers achieved in the green tree, we, unless we confess to degeneracy, can continue and fulfill in the dry.

In this particular matter, so much having been accomplished, it is only an ordinary assumption that the work should be finished; in due time, and with all proper regard for economy. For nothing can thrive that is left at loose ends. The value of a work, two-thirds executed, may be largely contingent upon its absolute completion. This is especially true of a thoroughfare, whereof use is an essential feature. And the use of PARK AVENUE, in its present disrupted state, is nevertheless such as to demand its ultimate construction,—southerly—in behalf of a public interest that will not, and ought not to be, denied.

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Sought patiently and urged persistently, that extension of PARK AVENUE is at last decreed; work upon it having even been begun. Decried, vilified indeed, by the niggardly and short-sighted; it will endure, to bless generations that play upon the unheeded graves of those who sneered at its bare suggestion. And foremost among the names that should be inscribed upon the handsome stones which private liberality ought to erect; to mark the measures of distance and indicate the speed of animals; in partial recognition of their judicious and sure action in the premises; are those of George P. Kendrick and George R. Spurr.

Once at Mill *Street*,—and the completion to the intersection of Stafford, with Leicester, *Streets*, will not belong delayed.

And—for the North! Shall there be no way of getting from East to West, between Highland *Street* and the Five Points, except we expose our lives to ever-imminent peril at the crossing of Mill Brook, near the Tan-yard? A people flourish in proportion to their facilities of intercommunication. Living strangers to each other, they feel as though they had no interests in common; and incline to oppose a measure that will benefit the man just across the ridge, because they cannot see any possible advantage it may be to themselves. But the construction of a Street, of the character and dimensions of PARK AVENUE, which shall afford an easy and safe passage from West

*Boylston Street*, on the West; to *Lincoln Street* on the East; would be a public improvement so obviously useful; which is even now almost indispensable; that the most inveterate grumbler would be stricken dumb. The faith of the COMMISSION in the ultimate good sense of their fellow-citizens has never wavered. They feel as well assured now, of the construction of the proposed AVENUE; from West to East, in North Worcester; as they were ever, when ridicule assailed its earliest mention by them, that the superb Street along the western side, which now finds universal acceptance, would be imperatively demanded and certainly built. And, indeed, there can be no alternative. A single broad Avenue will suffice: supplying the place of a multitude of cow-paths and lanes; giving character to the entire section; and affording the local population full assurance that they are valued for other reasons than because they pay a certain sum in taxes. The municipal government should be blessed as a general benefit: not endured as a local burden that cannot be thrown off.

The development of ELM PARK has progressed steadily. The task of excavating an additional and final Pool, towards the Northern end of the territory; commenced in the mild spell of weather that succeeded the first snow-fall; greatly to the surprise of the COMMISSION was at no time prevented,—scarcely even interrupted by cold or storm. The ground itself offered unusual facilities for working. Drainage already existed, along the course of the artificial outlet; and the soil needed neither to be paved nor puddled, to furnish a solid bottom. Large amounts of fairly good earth became available, wherewith to grade the plots beside Highland and Agricultural Streets; which, if compelled to await the purchase of dirt, might be unfilled to this day. The Highland Street plot met an imperative need. The COMMISSION have kept pretty close watch of the improvements upon the “Island;” so-called, it is presumed, because, when not surrounded by water, it is submerged. They had bargained for one thousand Norway Maples; designing them, when sufficiently grown, for Millbury, Quinsigamond, and Vernon Avenues, with their direct affluents. Those maples were delivered just after a

snow storm, in the latter part of March, had covered what frost still remained in the earth. Had it not been for the loose deposit already specified, there would have been difficulty enough, if not even distrust or hopelessness, of saving such untimely stock. As it happened, they could be heeled in:—and very shortly thereafter, in the advancing Spring, they could be planted out. Owing to the care and skill of *Mr.* Charles Madaus, in whose charge they were, so few perished that the COMMISSION have not computed the percentage. They grew well, appeared thoroughly rooted and thrifty in the Autumn, and should be fit for their intended location, some while before that is likely to be fit for them.

The new, or Angular Pool, (arbitrary names answer as well as others for simple designation), occupies an area of thirty-six thousand four hundred and four (36,404) square feet—more or less—according to the precision with which its retaining walls were built. Those walls, strongly laid by *Mr.* Steven Rowe; who has constructed so much of the dry masonry within the limits of the PARK; were so planned that when finished, they should afford a foot-walk three feet wide throughout. Carefully and solidly built of heavy stone; built, too, against a bank of stiff clay, or bog-iron ore; it is unlikely that they will need repair soon, if ever. The COMMISSION have learned, from dire experience of the soil wherewith they have to deal in ELM PARK, that it can be treated in but one way:—it must be mastered! Here, you can strike fire with a pick axe as from flint; but a few rods off, possibly yards, thirty feet of gas pipe will pierce the peat as if it were so much butter. And yet, the COMMISSION would have been obliged to relinquish their task, long since, but for that very diversity. The bog-iron ore crumbled into a nice red gravel, that supplied finer materials for Paths than money could buy. The soft peat, mixed with manure and turned over as compost, formed those mounds and pits which were such attractive and congenial homes for the Geranium or Petunia; thereafter yielding suitable and ripe food, or shelter, for the Lily, Pæony, or Tulip. Homely proverbs are but the echo, or traditions, of household truth. And so, one hand was made to wash



the other. It is not so very long—say a twelvemonth—since a writer in a local newspaper contrasted the work that had been done upon the Public Grounds of Worcester to its disadvantage, with what he had been pleased to observe in and about the Public Garden of Boston. None are better aware than this COMMISSION of the natural drawbacks under which they labor. Born in Worcester, they cannot help being rustics. The good old town begets Governors; supplies Senators; adapts law to the Federal exigencies; and has even been sought to fill vacancies upon the Judicial bench, when the Commonwealth knew not where else to turn. But, in a matter of taste, faugh! set up her ebenezers against æsthetic Athens!

Nevertheless,—the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, of the City of Worcester, dare to attempt the shield of the Templar. Organized as at present;—within the last ten years they have taken the COMMON, theretofore formless and void;—have filled it, raised it to a proper grade and, in fact, constructed it anew. Its Paths have been laid out; its Gutters paved with ocean-washed stone; its lawns leveled, sown to grass, and transformed from an eyesore to a pleasant landscape. ELM PARK was taken in hand—only within the last six (6) years: the results are open for inspection. Much that was accomplished during the first three (3) years, can never be retraced upon the chart; and endures fresh in but few memories. The almost hopeless excavations in bottomless ooze—with hands stiffened by frost as the sun set, or feet drenched in water as he rose; the treachery of the soil, where dykes slid in upon the workman, whose sole chance of progress was to mine by a system of segments as from a honey comb; with no foundation whereon to build but unfathomable mud; and which yet, from being fathomless seemed to be rendered buoyant, as even the specific gravity of a stone is counterpoised in water. A neat and substantial bridge built, where thirty (30) feet of boring-rod detected no hard bottom; yet built to endure—without piles! The earth needed to be reconstructed, so to speak. And the COMMISSION know, whether others see it or not, that the arduous task has been performed thoroughly and economically.



Consider now, the Public Garden of Boston, which excites so much admiration among a class of people who are fond of eating their cake and—keeping it! and who seldom realize, until too late, that “far-fetched is dear bought!” The very territory, early granted by the Town of Boston as the site for a Rope-Walk, was subsequently re-purchased, during the Mayoralty of Josiah Quincy, *Senior*, for the sum of fifty-four thousand dollars, (\$54,000). Years afterwards, an Iron Fence was built around it at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars, (\$25,000). Flower beds and Paths were laid out, from time to time, and five (5) granite basins with fountains constructed: the expense, doubtless large, not being specified in the somewhat minute article from which these facts are condensed. Add to all this the massive Bridge, whose construction must have required a pretty penny; and we come down to a date at which exact figures begin to confront the modern Athenian. The following statement shows the cost for the past eleven seasons;—the financial year of Boston beginning May 1st, and ending on the 30th of April, subsequent:

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Appropriation.</i>
1869—70 . . . . .	\$17,175 42
1870—71 . . . . .	11,653 62
1871—72 . . . . .	15,294 24
1872—73 . . . . .	25,882 74
1873—74 . . . . .	19,437 36
1874—75 . . . . .	20,044 18
1875—76 . . . . .	21,474 62
1876—77 . . . . .	18,748 76
1877—78 . . . . .	22,419 00
1878—79 . . . . .	14,873 81
1879—80 . . . . .	16,800 00

The cost for the season ending April 30, A. D., 1881, was roughly computed at from \$12,000 to \$15,000. And every cent of this expenditure, mind you! upon the Public Garden, only,—twenty-four and one-quarter ( $24\frac{1}{4}$ ) acres of land. Our own ELM PARK comprises an area, larger by three and one-quarter ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ) acres. Upon it nothing was done, or attempted, until the winter of 1874;—when, in consequence of the dis-

tress assumed to prevail from lack of employment, the City Council adopted the following:

*Ordered*,—that the Joint Standing Committee on Highways be, and they hereby are, authorised, with the concurrence of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to cause the earth to be excavated and spread, in ELM PARK, in such places and to such extent as said COMMISSION shall direct: the expense not to exceed Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000:) and to be charged to the appropriation for Shade Trees and Public Grounds, when such appropriation shall be made."

Such eleemosynary labor was not likely to tire itself; and it easily wearied in well-doing. However, a great pile of dirt was heaped up, which this COMMISSION had to spread, subsequently, at considerable extra cost. The sum charged, to the COMMISSION for that out-door Relief was \$1867.76: to which should be added \$134.00, the amount spent for Plank and Wheelbarrows; all which were finally carted to the City Barn, and so forever lost to the Public Grounds. But the excavation remained; and, enlarged as it has been, subsequently, from year to year, became agreeably manifest in the Pools: whose waters sparkle in the Summer sun; or, frozen, yield convenient and safe skating throughout the Winter. The Pond, in the Public Garden of Boston, is represented as measuring Three and One-Quarter ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ) acres. The Pools in Elm Park are somewhat in excess of Three and One-Half ( $3\frac{1}{2}$ ) Acres, and lack something like a half acre of their proposed dimensions. Of course,—no contrast is intended between that elaborate Garden and our own unpretending PARK. It was considered pertinent to show what had to be done, in either case; and to indicate, in some faint degree, the proportion of achievement to available means. The appropriation for this COMMISSION, are meant to be applied to its entire work. The development of ELM PARK cannot be allowed to absorb the whole sum, whatever that may be. The planting and care of Shade-Trees; with incessant if irregular charges for pruning decayed or dangerous limbs; imposes a sure and inevitable burden. The proper care of the COMMON, occupies the time of one man, at least, whose labor must be paid for. At this present writing, all the workmen in the service of the COMMISSION are engaged, and bid fair to be

for a while, in rendering the Walks merely practicable. These are constant expenses, petty in detail, yet combining to foot up a large aggregate, that can never be estimated in advance. Theft and damage occasioned an outlay of nearly Thirty Dollars (\$30) in a single year, upon the Pumps on the COMMON and in ELM PARK. Add, to all this, the purchase and setting-out of Shade-Trees along our principal thoroughfares, for an indefinite amount of which expenditure the COMMISSION estimate and allow annually; and it will be evident that there is not much opportunity for extravagance. Indeed,—the COMMISSION, resolute not to exceed their appropriation, often find themselves constrained to the practice of a frugality, that is only not parsimony, because there is in it no taint of meanness. The cost of their every plan of ornamentation could not be more painfully studied, had they reason to believe that each dollar would be their last. Thus harshly cramped, it is only astonishing that their landscape has not approved itself more inflexible than the stiffest outlines of Le Notre.

The COMMISSION have possessed neither hot-bed nor cold frame. What bulbs or cuttings the *Chairman* could preserve in his own cellar, or multiply, in the little conservatory attached to his own home; have been so kept and propagated with the seedlings which he was always glad to start. Every *Aquilegia* in ELM PARK, during the past two years, was thus originated. Of course, there need be no other limit to the quantity of plants in the Public Garden, of Boston, than what can be derived from the Hot or Cold Houses and the force employed in them and always within call.\* Bulbs are cheap enough, when there are no strings to the purse; and a brilliant temporary display, whether of the Tulip, or Gladiolus, is much more a matter of dollars and cents than a test of proficiency in Floriculture. This COMMISSION, being in hearty accord with the recent Floral Renaissance, have striven chiefly to collect and establish

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\*The average number of men employed upon the "Common and Public Grounds," of Boston, for ten (10) months ending January 20, 1880, was Five Hundred and Forty-Five (545) !! upon the Public Grounds of Worcester, Five!

a full and thrifty growth of the newer flowering Shrubs that have been found suited to our climate; and a display, as complete as possible, of those herbaceous biennials, or perennials, which constituted the charms of our older Gardens; and which, in their manifold varieties; cross-bred or sports; will combine to impart such glowing attractions in this present year of our Lord. *Aquilegia*, and *Dianthus*; *Lilium* and *Pæonia*; *Delphinium* and *Phlox*; precede or follow in showy succession: while *Lilac*, and *Deutzia*; *Weigela*, and *Rhododendron*; *Althæa*, and *Azalea*; develop with a grand magnificence that immeasurably surpasses all ~~their~~ <sup>other</sup> floriage. The COMMISSION will continue in the path marked out hitherto; not forgetting that tastes differ and fashions change; and that the merely cunning trick of carpet bedding would doubtless find favor with some, although the barbarous practice is rapidly declining. But, Beauty itself is of, and for, all time; and they can never go far amiss, who love it for its own fair sake. Nevertheless, it is as true now, as of yore,—in floriculture as in war;—"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off!" Those who put in honest work, with sincere aims, whether in Boston or Worcester, will, in all likelihood, achieve most and best. After so much accomplishment, the querulous carping of grumblers and critics must needs merit and receive slight attention.

The entire appropriation for the Public Grounds and Shade-Trees, during the last Seven (7) years; within which period has been achieved all that has been done upon Elm Park; were as follows:—

A. D., 1874, \$5,000: A. D., 1876, \$3,000: A. D., 1878, \$4,000: A. D., 1880, \$5,000:  
A. D., 1875, \$4,000: A. D., 1877, \$3,000: A. D., 1879, \$5,000:

"And brought forth fruit—some an hundred fold."

It is with inexpressible satisfaction that the COMMISSION have noticed the rapid spread of the gospel heretofore expounded in these Reports. Part of the seed fell by the wayside, and lost its vitality under harsh exposure. But other some was sown by Sir Arthur Helps: and being incorporated in Hudson

*Reader*, it may be hoped, ordinary luck attending it, that it will take root and flourish in our High School. How true is it, in this as in so many other cases that it was "builded wiser than they knew!" There may have been good reasons for rejecting the stone: nevertheless, had there been a serious flaw in it, it would never have become the "head of the corner." Now, let the whole body of Tax Payers profit by the instruction commended to our advanced youth!

"It must not be supposed that works of Art are the only, or the chief, public improvements needed in any country. Wherever men congregate, the elements become scarce. The supply of Air, Light, and Water, is then a matter of the highest public importance; and the magnificent utilitarianism of the Romans should precede the nice sense of beauty of the Greeks. Or rather, the former should be worked out in the latter.

"In fine, the substantial improvement, and even the embellishment, of towns, is a work which both the central and local governing bodies in a country should keep a steady hand upon. It especially concerns them. What are they there for, but to do that which individuals cannot do. It concerns them, too, as it tells upon the health, morals, education, and refined pleasures of the people they govern. In doing it, they should avoid pedantry, parsimony, and favoritism; and their mode of action should be large, considerate, and farseeing. Large; inasmuch as they must not easily be contented with the second-best in any of their projects. Considerate; inasmuch as they have to think what their people need most, not what will make most show. And therefore they should be contented, for instance, at their work going on under ground, for a time, or in by-ways, if needful; the best charity in public works, as in private, being often that which courts least notice. Lastly,—their works should be with foresight; recollecting that cities grow up about us, like young people, before we are aware of it."

The Laureate of England indulged, long ago, in a "Dream of Fair Women." Hard-headed Yankee publishers have lately clothed that dream in fitting illusion; and placed it, in an *édition de luxe*, before the disciples of Calvin and Edwards. The suc-

cess of the venture might well be predestined; for there are weak spots in the Thirty-Nine Articles, and diamonds in the desert. The writer has dreamed dreams of municipal improvement, whereof many are realized; and more are likely to be; notwithstanding he was denounced, by men who cumber the earth, as a reckless spendthrift. Let him, in addition to his former fancies, see once more, in visions, the future Worcester! Future—in the sense that inexorable necessity will compel; immediate or more remote, as pinching parsimony or stolid unthrift may retard its progress. At his age—reverting to the beginning, and being able to recall the intervals of enforced stagnation; until now he witnesses a general revival and activity to which counting-room, and easy chair, seem attentive only as it affects themselves individually; it is hard to withhold the utterance of indignant comment upon that ignorance, or selfishness, which would cripple or mislead. On all sides—the hammer and trowel; constantly a centrifugal motion from the heart of the town to its suburbs. The collective man, alone;—the legal citizen, registered upon the voting list and represented at the City Hall; is all that admits ineptitude; cannot take the tide at its flood; and, stamping his foot upon the hole in the earth wherein his talent lies buried, congratulates himself, poor fool! that so much is secure! But meanwhile, in an age of struggle for precedence, he has lost the race!

Yet the possible city of the future is beheld, not “through a hole in the wall,” but with merely human prescience, in this valley of the Upper Blackstone; at the foot of the same symmetrical hills; but how changed! That AVENUE, so long hoped for, at last completed, fulfills every promise of its projectors, even the most sanguine. And, furnishing a ready way for traffic or transit, it reminds those who are in the constant enjoyment of its facilities, how much they owe to the prophets who never saw the promised land but in moments of rapt inspiration. Encompassing the whole territory, its scope suffices for the most ambitious expansion; nor yet, in direction, or radius fails to meet, or even anticipate, all possible wants of generation to come. Along, over, and across it, are borne the throngs th-

would fain reach the Lake, in season for the first race in the pending Regatta. For, by that time, the Causeway has been pierced with the series of Inverted Arches, so often advocated in these Reports; and the Athletes of the whole Republic are eager to test sinew and skill over a course, whose fame has grown world-wide, and wherefrom chicanery and fraud are sternly and rigidly excluded. The Lake-sides are crowned with the homes of a happy population, to whom the aspect of Nature, in her brightest loveliness, is a common and continual enjoyment. As by the Lakes in Central New York, the slopes are covered with vineyards; persistence having developed varieties sure to perfect their fruit, in similar exposures; and the keen aptness of our people not suffering the lesson to be lost. The Peach—of yore so prolific in all the lacustrine towns, again affords the harvest for which Grafton and Shrewsbury, scarcely knowing why, were always noted. Access was rendered easy; and man entered in and possessed the land, before surrendered to the huckleberry and white birch. The valley hitherward may be darkened by the smoke of a hundred furnaces; but, over by the Lake, the sun shall lighten up a landscape dotted with the picturesque dwellings of a community that first found out, and thereafter profited by the knowledge, that it is not all of life to live. That there are amenities and pleasures to be experienced, while life is fleeting; which, like the silver lining to the cloud will, if welcomed, irradiate the darkest gloom.

And the Seer notes, also, that in such, not remote, future, the Law of Eminent Domain has received a new and enlightened application. Whereby large and pure streams of water are no longer suffered to run to waste over mill-wheels, but are stored up and retained for the myriad domestic uses of the great communities that have hived along their course. The superior necessity dominates the less. The factory must avail itself of the more modern power of steam. For the aggregated inhabitants, the people, cannot consent to be fleeced, in a perennial tribute, for every drop of an indispensable element that shall, can, or ever may, fall from propitious skies. Some rights or titles are concessions—vested indeed, and properly enough mat-



ters of bargain and sale: being also contingent upon bankruptcy. Other some are imprescriptible; a portion of the popular prerogative, or sovereignty; and therefore, if ever alienated, lapsed, or derogated from, liable to be resumed at will. And, of these latter, is the title to the waters of the Blackstone; which, finding their sources in the pellucid fountains that flow from Asnebumskit, at an elevation commensurate with our necessities, descend a gentle but continuous declivity, to mingle with the village excrement and wool-yolk held in solution by Kettle Brook.

When the acquisition of NEWTON HILL was first recommended by this COMMISSION, A. D., 1871, the following argument was advanced:

"If the entire, or even a major part, of the water supply of the City is to be derived from Leicester, that Hill must be invaluable in the immediate future, as the site for a Reservoir which shall hold a temporary store against emergencies, and also aid in equalizing the pressure throughout that broad arc in which the western suburbs are comprised, and in the chord subtending which it is the most salient feature."

With how much greater force does this reasoning apply, now that it becomes so plainly evident that the future ample supply of pure water must be sought, where it was always to be found, between Holden and Paxton, at the fountains of the Blackstone; on the north eastern slopes of Asnebumskit. Gravitation delivers that water, sparkling from its untainted sources, upon the top of NEWTON HILL—six hundred and seventy-two and twenty-nine one-hundredths ( $672\frac{29}{100}$ ) feet above tide water; or five and seventy-nine one-hundredths ( $5\frac{79}{100}$ ) feet above high water at Bell Pond. The Reservoir, so often predicted, has been constructed upon the summit of that Hill. Massive enough to endure pressure and sufficiently large for its special needs. Mains extend from it through PARK AVENUE, North and South, while eastward, conducting pipes radiate throughout every street, perfecting the circulation and imparting a sense of actual security from fire, hitherto a stranger. The Seer of to-day does not repeat himself, although reaffirming every prediction of old. Adown



that eminence, thus crowned with a distributing Reservoir, will flow steady streams adequate whether for ornament or use; convenient for the Jets in the PARK; or ready, upon the instant, to suppress an incipient conflagration.

‘This COMMISSION has indulged in no visions to mislead the unwary. Its suggestions have ever been the fruit of the most mature deliberation. Proposing only improvements of a material and substantial character, it has justified its action by explaining their close connection with the appearance of the Worcester of the future.’

Those remarks, expressed in their Annual Report, A. D., 1874, are reiterated all the more confidently, that Time has tested their truth.

The present generation has been largely true to its opportunities. So far as this COMMISSION has felt free to make suggestions, it has found them adopted and carried out with singular frequency. It cherishes abiding faith that, as it is now, so shall it be, ever. And, in such conviction; that Worcester will neither falter nor recede, as long as the heart is borne so proudly upon her escutcheon, as her civic emblem; the head may well acquiesce and rest content.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER, MASS., Jan. 24, A. D., 1881.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

CITY OF WORCESTER,

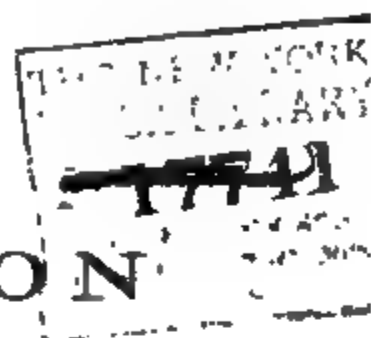
FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30. 1881.

WORCESTER, MASS.

PRINTED BY CHAS. HAMILTON,  
311 MAIN STREET.

1882.





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

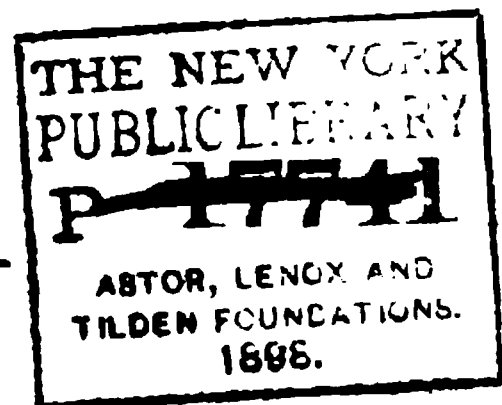
# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1881.



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WORCESTER, MASS. :

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE COMMISSION OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL:*

A "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same" during the official year that ended on the Thirtieth (30th) day of November, A. D. 1881, is herewith submitted, as required by the Twenty-First (21st) Section of the municipal Charter:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

*In account with*

CITY OF WORCESTER,

*Cr.:*

Annual Appropriation,	\$5,500 00
Grass, etc.,	84 00
Conscience,	10
Sum,	<hr/> \$5,584 10

*Per contra, Dr.:*

Steady labor,	\$2,227 72
Occasional labor of teams, with drivers,	181 74
Trees, shrubs, etc., and setting trees,	1,243 38
Hardware, tools, and repairs of same,	197 33
Seeds, loam and manure,	533 43
Printing Report,	33 20

Freight, trucking, etc.,	8 25
Desk, stationery, etc.,	25 95
Grain, water-fowl, etc.,	12 30
Engineer Department, law, etc.,	86 12
Planing and clearing ice,	22 98
Lumber and carpentry,	73 62
Repairing settees,	56 80
Iron bridge and foundations,	619 86
Paving around street trees,	21 00
Cement and sand,	14 15
Stone and labor,	148 10
Plumbing town pumps,	16 75
Iron foot-bridge,	5 00
Painting bridges, tool-house, etc.,	25 91
Fence wire, baskets, cordage, blacksmith work,	27 71
	<hr/>
	\$5,581 30
Unexpended, to Sinking Fund,	2 80

The *Common* has been maintained in order; so far as was practicable under regulations that are not self-executing; and with the further understanding that this very contracted Public Ground lies under the immediate observation of the Civic Police. The lawns were protected from invasion, but imperfectly; new footpaths daily attesting the inclination of the reckless, or wanton, to mar what they cannot appreciate. Nevertheless, the COMMISSION believe that their fellow-citizens, as a body, desire the *Common* to be kept neat, clean, and green. To be so kept that when, as upon the return of His Excellency, the "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the State," from the Yorktown Centennial, it becomes convenient and desirable to hold a review of militia upon that ancient Training-Field, it shall be found in suitable condition and order. To that end, and for similar uses, it is indispensable that the grass shall be suffered to grow. Trampled upon at the sweet will of each person who, hurried or uncertain, in the effort to make a straight chute from Park to Front streets, meanders aimlessly in a criss-cross and zig-zag circuit of twice the distance; so that he only goes where he ought not and has no occasion to be; the forlorn waste of old will be restored. A pretty close observation has convinced the *Chairman* that the existing Pathways are ample for all present and future needs of the population; that they are sufficiently direct



to afford ready approach to any accessible point; and that those who are continually infringing the rules of the COMMISSION,—established in the interest of the whole community,—are proper subjects for police discipline. In the good time coming, it is expected that the future Ideal Police will leap from their downy couches, whereon they are recumbent in that marble palace,—indispensable workshop of Justice and her tools,—nor weary in well-doing. The present difficulty in detecting offenders upon the Public Grounds, or persons injuring the Ornamental and Shade-Trees of the City, is easily explicable. Given!—luxurious quarters; with inlaid checker-boards and ivory dominoes, and you will see the average policeman rush out into the rain, or snow, in jubilant chase of delinquents!

“I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls.”

In their Report for A. D. 1880, the COMMISSION assuming that *Front Street* would be graded, and improved in other respects wherein renovation is in fact demanded by the importance of that thoroughfare; remarked, as follows:—

“Should *Front Street* be paved, as advised by His Honor the Mayor, some method will have to be adopted to retain the North Walk of the Common. Then would seem to be the time to put down the kerb-stone like that which limits and adorns the North line of *Park Street*. The old kerb, employed elsewhere, would by so much reduce the cost of substitution.”

That opinion is reiterated. All,—the citizen, and the stranger within our gates; the delegate to Republican conventions which make Governors; and the Governor who finds in a military ball the pretext for coming to see what kind of a place it is where they turn out such contrivances as himself; all, and each, leave the Union Station; take a wondering view of that strange apparition upon the monument; and pass, dazed, through *Front Street*, should it chance to be passable! Might it not be worth the while, taking that chance, to render it presentable? And how so,—better than by putting down a kerb, on the North line of the *Common*, like that which defines it upon the South!

The original dedication of the tract of land, officially dubbed *Central Park*; but known to this COMMISSION, and to the *People*,

as the *Common* — without any nonsense ; by the rude forefathers of the hamlet, for the purposes of a Training-Field ; has been kept sedulously in mind. Every facility is afforded ; even to the mowing of the lawns after the usual working hours ; when it becomes notorious, — not known, — that companies of the local militia are likely to parade. If at no other time, the courtesy of a little seasonable information from such companies, when His Excellency the Governor is to be marched upon that *Common*, under their escort, would not be wasted. For it might at least enable the proper authorities to recognize the felicitous occasion, and official presence, by hanging out their banner, if not upon outer walls, at worst from the Civic Flag-Staff. The ensign of the Republic, belonging to Worcester, is not confided to this COMMISSION. But, though not responsible for its custody, its chronic invisibility, upon public occasions, has caused them to suffer unmerited censure.

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass., October 24, A. D., 1881.

*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL.*

The accompanying note, from Mr. H. H. Bigelow, addressed to myself, individually, but doubtless intended for the Chairman of the COMMISSION, was handed to me at 11 o'clock A. M. of this day. It is transmitted to the *Honorable Council*, because this COMMISSION has no funds applicable to such purchase ; and more especially for the reason that the opinion of their fellow-citizens would be desirable as to the policy of the acquisition itself:—

[Copy of Note.]

WORCESTER, MASS., Oct. 24, 1881.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,—I am about to take the Fountain down in the Skating Rink, preparatory for the Skating Season. Not knowing if it can be placed back again another year, I will offer the sale of it to you for the purpose of placing it on the Common.

I will set it connected, all complete with fixtures to connect the same to save all the water for drinking purposes or to spread it nicely over a large amount of Lawn.

The sum of money will not exceed One Thousand Dollars and as much less as possible.

Yours Respt.,

H. H. BIGELOW

The views of the COMMISSION upon the general subject were expressed, at length, as long ago as January, A. D., 1872. In the Annual Report, of that date, occurs the subjoined passage:—

“The plan of improvement, devised and so far executed, by the Commission, will be incomplete until after the construction of a FOUNTAIN or, more strictly, JET D'EAU. No City, within knowledge, enjoys equal facilities for the production of an imposing effect of this nature. A survey has already been made and the stakes are set, denoting the intended location of an Octagonal Basin, twenty feet in diameter, which is precisely one-half of the contemplated size. The finest display will be produced by a hollow column, thrown in a single, perpendicular jet to any height desirable so long as the falling spray shall be restricted to proper limits. It is believed that water enough could be spared to permit the play of the Jet upon Holidays, when it would, of itself, furnish an extraordinary attraction for the multitudes who throng our streets in search of amusement. In no other way can the City as cheaply supply so much innocent gratification. Sums, largely exceeding the utmost expense estimated by the Commission, were appropriated without grudging, in former years for evanescent shows of Fireworks. This simple, unadorned JET is within the plan of work which should be completed during the season that is rapidly approaching. A Fountain might be introduced, for ordinary occasions, in exact conformity to the original design, the spent waters of which, when played, should be conducted to the intersection of Salem Square with Front Street, at the North-East corner of the Common, there to supply a much needed convenience wherefrom the tired wayfarer and his animals may quench their thirst. No waste would then be possible of the invaluable element that has cost so much to introduce and diffuse, but which cannot be in too lavish abundance for every legitimate purpose.”

Those views are still cherished. No particular opportunity of estimating the full capacity of Mr. Bigelow's Fountain has been afforded to the COMMISSION. Its radius is understood, however, to exceed by far the possible limits of the Rink. The COMMISSION adhere to the position taken in 1872, that any Fountain will be inadequate which does not allow of a perpendicular Jet, to be operated, on special occasions, under the full head from Leicester. Neither Chatsworth, nor Versailles, could begin to equal such a display. Whether the construction of Mr. Bigelow's Fountain is such as to permit the introduction of the requisite hollow core is not known to the COMMISSION. As a Fountain merely, the castings are doubtless adequate, at present.

Should the offer of Mr. Bigelow commend itself to the *Honorable Council*, it would be best, in every way, to make an outright purchase. This COMMISSION, with the co-operation of the Water Department, may

well be trusted to do all the work essential to the re-erection of that Fountain.

All which is respectfully submitted (by)

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

WORCESTER is growing in population; and her dwellings inevitably and pleasantly extend farther into the country with each succeeding year. Many new residences are built; others, of humble pretensions originally, are enlarged, or re-constructed; and, not seldom, houses are moved and re-set in another—more remote location. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS esteem this latter class of civic necessities as the chiefest of their tribulations. It is not recounted among the ills that tested, without exhausting, the patience of Job. But of what avail to live these thousands of years later, if we cannot suffer more and endure better! The final perseverance of the Saints must be of slight worth, if it does not sanctify those who illustrate the virtue. Under what sanction, or pretence of it; or by what excuse, save stress of weather, the Patriarchal salt deposited his ark upon another antediluvian's hill-top, may never be known. But the recession of the waters could furnish him with no better, or stronger, pleas in bar of trespass than that contractor would have who, authorized to move a building, A. D., 1882, "under the supervision of the Commissioner of Highways," shall find himself brought to a summary halt as he invades a street, that is twenty-five feet between the kerbs, with a house five feet wider.

In the Report of this COMMISSION, A. D., 1874, may be found the following passage:—

"This COMMISSION desire most earnestly to invite the attention of the *Board of Aldermen* to the whole subject of the moving of buildings through the public streets. For three successive years have questions arisen; not necessarily affecting the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, as has been judicially decided; but which their fellow-citizens not unnaturally suppose to be included in their jurisdiction. During the year A. D., 1871, application was made to Mayor Earle for leave to move the house of the late William Brown through Pleasant Street. That most courteous gentleman and vigilant functionary inspected the route, in company with the contractor, Mr. Babcock, and the Chairman

of this COMMISSION. Finding that there were but Twenty-Five Feet (25) between the kerb-stones, Mr. Babcock declined to assume the responsibility of the damage inevitable upon the passage of so large a building as a whole. Here, the matter rested. Subsequently, during the official term of Mayor Verry, the desired permission was obtained, a condition being established that the house should be moved in sections."

The incidents attendant upon the transfer, to their present sites, of the mansions of *Hon.* Isaac Davis, and *Dr.* Henry Clarke, are recited at length in former Reports of this COMMISSION. They need not be repeated here:—one record sufficing. In the first case, at the instance and with the cordial co-operation of *Mayor* Jillson; not less than in deference to urgent importunity from at least a moiety of the abutters along the route of proposed removal; this COMMISSION applied to the Supreme Court for an injunction. That remedy was refused; perhaps because of an imperfect statement of the case: possibly from a preponderance in the scales of Justice, of the eminent gravity of counsel for the respondent:—the goddess electing, as often depicted, to go it blind.

All those buildings were subdivided; the sections alone being often adequate to fill the roadway. Latterly,—the large mansion of *Dr.* Joseph Sargent has traversed South Main *Street*,—in practicable subdivision; no portion being retained so wide as to wholly cover the roadway, or to effectually impede traffic and travel for a serious space of time. There were, of course, complaints; some harm resulted to trees; yet there was less actual injury than might have been expected.

A recent case, involving various questions affecting the authority of this COMMISSION; and its legal ability to guard the Shade-Trees along the highways from probable, or consequential, injury; is so fully set forth in the subjoined official correspondence that it will require no other statement.

[COPY.]

" COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Mass., November 30, A. D. 1881.

To JAMES M. DRENNAN, Esq., *City Marshal*:

SIR; I have just learned, by the merest accident, to my extreme astonishment, that it is proposed to facilitate the transfer of the house,—the residence of

the late William Cross, — to its new location, by lifting and removing the Shade-Trees along the southerly line of Cedar Street.

To such lifting and removal this COMMISSION does not now, nor will it in future, consent.

The License of the *Honorable Board of MAYOR and ALDERMEN* carries with it no privilege of abuse or illegality.

In behalf of this COMMISSION, I have to request that you will direct the Police-Force, under your command, to guard the Shade-Trees along Cedar Street from injury, or molestation, from whatever source it may proceed or be threatened.

I remain, Very Respectfully,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

The original note was handed to *Assistant Churchill*, in the absence of the Marshal, at 3 o'clock p. m., of the day of its date.

" COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Mass., Dec. 1, A. D. 1881.

To FRANK P. GOULDING, Esq., *City Solicitor* :

DEAR SIR : — May I ask you to favor me, at your earliest convenience, with your opinion upon the following points, to wit :

The Board of Mayor and Aldermen licensing the removal of a vacant dwelling-house, and its transfer to a new location through the public streets, does that permission or sufferance authorize the licensee to dig up, remove, or inflict injury upon, the Shade Trees planted along said streets?

Does a proviso, accompanying said license, that the work of such removal and transfer shall be done subject to the supervision of the Highway Commissioner, in any way or manner qualify, restrict, or do away with that 'sole care, superintendence, and management of the Shade-Trees standing and growing upon the streets' that is vested in the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS by the Municipal Charter?

I remain, Very Respectfully and Truly,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

[COPY.]

" WORCESTER, Dec. 1, 1881.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Esq.,

*Chairman Commission Public Grounds, etc. :*

DEAR SIR : — Yours of this date asks my opinion upon the question whether if the Board of MAYOR and ALDERMEN license the removal of a building through the Streets, the licensee is authorized to dig up, remove or inflict injury upon the Shade-Trees planted along said Streets, and upon the further question whether a proviso accompanying such license that the work shall be

done under the supervision of the Highway Commissioner would, in any way or manner, qualify, restrict or do away with that 'sole care, superintendence and management of the Shade-Trees standing and growing upon the Streets' that is vested in the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS by the Charter.

In answer I will say that I have examined the Charter and City Ordinances, bearing upon the question, and submit the following as my opinion:—

The 2d Section of Chap. 47 of the Ordinances prohibits moving buildings in the Streets without a written license from the Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor and Aldermen have the right to couple such license with any condition they see fit. By the license, the licensee is relieved from any violation of that Ordinance, if he complies with the terms of his license. He is not, by it, authorized by implication to violate any other law, — whether Common Law, Statute Law, or Ordinance.

By the 21st section of the City Charter, 'the sole care, superintendence and management of the Shade and Ornamental Trees, standing and growing in or upon any of the public streets and highways of said City, are reposed in the Commissioners of Public Grounds,' etc.

Chap. 47, § 7, of the City Ordinances, prohibits the 'digging up, injuring, or destroying any Ornamental or Shade Tree, Shrub, or Vine, growing and being in any of the streets or highways, or in any of the public lands of said City, without the consent of the Commissioners of Public Grounds first obtained therefor in writing.'

I am of opinion that this is a valid Ordinance, and that the Mayor and Aldermen have no power to authorize any person to violate it; and I also am of opinion that the license to move a building through a Street, whether with or without the supervision of the Highway Commissioner, is not intended to authorize, and does in no way authorize a violation of that Ordinance.

See also Gen. Sts., Ch. 46, § 7.

I need hardly add that such a license in no way affects the authority of the Commissioners on Public Grounds over the Shade-Trees in the Streets.

In conclusion I will say that I am of opinion that a license to move a building in the Streets does not carry with it, in terms or by implication, any authority to dig up, injure or destroy any Ornamental or Shade-Tree growing or being in the Streets. If such building cannot be moved without digging up, injuring or destroying such Shade Trees, the consent of the Commissioners of Public Grounds and Shade Trees must first be obtained therefor in writing.

Probably the Ordinance was enacted upon the presumption that, if any exigency arose reasonably requiring some greater or less injury to a shade tree, or a temporary removal of it, the consent of the Commissioners having charge of the Shade Trees would be readily given.

However that may be, the Ordinance seems to be explicit, and it needs no argument to conclude that one branch of the City Council cannot, if it desired, license a violation of an Ordinance passed by both branches.

I send a copy of this letter to Mr. Perry, who has verbally asked my opinion upon the same subject.

Very truly yours,

F. P. GOULDING,

*City Solicitor."*



[COPY.]

" COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 2, A. D. 1881.

To JOSEPH S. PERRY, *Commissioner of Highways*:

DEAR SIR:—In pursuance of the understanding this day had, at our conference with the City Marshal, I will state that the COMMISSION consents to the taking up of the maple tree that obstructs the pathway of the 'William Cross house' into Cedar *Street*; said tree being replaced securely and as soon as may be.

And this COMMISSION will not object to the transit and removal of said house through Cedar *Street*, because of possible injury to Shade Trees, with the distinct understanding that the supervision of the Highway Commissioner conferred or imposed by the *Board* of MAYOR and ALDERMEN shall be construed as requiring him to guard the Shade Trees along the route of removal from being lifted or harmed. And this, — not that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS have any desire to shirk from or evade a duty; — but because one 'supervision' should be enough.

I subscribe myself, Very Truly,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

" COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 3, A. D. 1881.

To FRANK P. GOULDING, Esq., *City Solicitor*:

DEAR SIR:—Your opinion, as *City Solicitor*, which I formally invited, upon the matter of the jurisdiction over the Shade-Trees in the Public Streets, was duly received; and I beg to thank you for the promptness with which it was rendered.

Lucid and conclusive as it is, and of course satisfactory in so far as it sustains the general position maintained by this COMMISSION, you will pardon me for the suggestion that your recognition of the exclusive control over the public Shade-Trees, claimed by myself in behalf of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. is founded upon a Municipal Ordinance, rather than upon the Charter of the City, whence I am pleased to derive it. That Charter vests the 'sole care, superintendence and management of the Shade-Trees standing and growing upon the Streets' in a COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS; whose method of election, and manner of performing their functions, are particularly defined. In the same Charter is to be found the only warrant for the existence of a CITY COUNCIL. The specific point that I make, is, that the sole care, superintendence and management conferred by the Charter,—in other words, the jurisdiction of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS;—cannot be limited, enlarged, or diminished by any power inferior to that whereby it was originally delegated.

You may think that no immediate issue requires a decision of that point. I desire to present it to you distinctly, however, for your consideration at



leisure; and may be allowed to express the hope that a solution of the question, should it at any time become imperative, may emanate from the same source as that wherefrom the City now wisely elects to obtain its legal direction and guidance.

Believe me, very Respectfully and Sincerely,

EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

Their number is not now so large,—who will be swift to accuse the *Chairman* of partiality; or to assume, even if blood is thicker than water, that he will therefore forget his duty and violate his official oath.

Yet it would appear but reasonable that some definite rules should be established, to govern this whole class of cases, hereafter. For instance,—a requirement that any building, to be moved, shall be so reduced, by subdivision, as to bear a certain proportion to the width of the streets through which it has to pass. That proportion is of easy determination in each case, which would then stand upon its own merits. And the privilege of occupying the streets, to the exclusion of everything else, is surely worth some little expenditure and sacrifice. Of course,—conditions are worth nothing,—whether prior or subsequent,—unless they are enforced. "How goes it, Dean?" "Well, it goes!" may do for a salutation among hail-fellows. As official "supervision," in discharge of duty, it may also serve to point a moral.

The hard but inevitable strife with corporations has not yet come to a head. Yet the *Chairman* notes its swift approach

"With that stern joy which warriors feel  
In foemen worthy of their steel."

By sufferance of the *City Council*, Telegraph and Telephone Companies have invaded the City, during the last year; lopping the limbs, or felling the trunks, of trees, indiscriminately, as best suited their immediate purpose. And despite precaution, protest, or direct complaint at the Police Office, the aggressor triumphs;—the sufferer remains without redress. The Republican must not alienate, nor offend: his party might be weakened should anybody take (in this matter—*spoil?*) umbrage. The

Democrat will not squeak,—for his own sake, not his party's; that, long since, was “fast-bound in misery and iron.” And still, though the day of reckoning may not be far off,—the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS are sorely tempted; when told by the City Marshal of some newer mutilation and wreck which he observes on the road from Paxton and overlooks in the repose of his office; to cry out with him of old,—“How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation?” “One generation passeth away and another generation cometh.” But when it is here, although those who longed for it were not spared to hail the dawn,—neither wealth, nor lust, nor principalities, nor power, shall longer offend. The reign of *Astræa*, for which the blind giant has hitherto groped in vain, shall recommence; and—brightest of Northern Lights! the aspect, prospect, and retrospect of the popular demagogue shall fade away in a continually receding illusion!

In the Report of the COMMISSION for A. D., 1880, the *Chairman* assumed the role of a prophet:—

“And the Seer notes, also, that in such, not remote, future, the Law of Eminent Domain has received a new and enlightened application. Whereby large and pure streams of water are no longer suffered to run to waste over mill-wheels, but are stored up and retained for the myriad domestic uses of the great communities that have hived along their course. The superior necessity dominates the less. The factory must avail itself of the more modern power of steam. For the aggregated inhabitants, the people, cannot consent to be fleeced, in a perennial tribute, for every drop of an indispensable element that shall, can, or ever may, fall from propitious skies. Some rights or titles are concessions—vested indeed, and properly enough matters of bargain and sale: being also contingent upon bankruptcy. Other some are imprescriptible; a portion of the popular prerogative, or sovereignty; and therefore, if ever alienated, lapsed, or derogated from, liable to be resumed at will. And, of these latter, is the title to the waters of the Blackstone; which, finding their sources in the pellucid fountains that flow from Asnebumskit, at an elevation commensurate with our necessities, descend a gentle but continuous declivity, to mingle with the village excrement and wool-yelk held in solution by Kettle Brook.”

The theory that streams shall be arrested at their fountains, and compelled to serve human necessities, may not be acceptable to the few who have checked the current below, and constrained it to grind their private grist. But it is a theory based upon an

absolute Public Want, and therefore of inevitable acceptance. Unless there are reasons of geographical convenience and proximity, that may better answer the demands of Millbury; there can be no doubt that, ere long, that thriving town must become one of our suburban Wards; if in no other way she can gain the right to draw from the Reservoirs that will constitute of Tatnuck *Brook*, a continuous and sufficient basin. The surveyors, of Worcester, find that the height of the Holden Reservoir, raised fifteen (15) feet above its present level, would be 735.30 feet above mean tide-water. That Reservoir, thus enlarged, is computed at a capacity of One Billion Gallons (1,000,000,000). It is also found that the overflow of the pond on the "privilege" of the Wire Mill at Quinsigamond *Village*, is 438.24 feet above the mean sea level. It will be seen that there is an almost precipitous fall, in a very few miles, through a valley that would appear to have been created for the precise purpose of retaining Water. If it would not answer to buy out and flood *South*, and *New*, Worcester, we might content ourselves with the level of the Loring Coes-Hardy pond, at 488.6 feet elevation; and the head, thus gained, would start the shingles from any roof in Millbury, if not from the scurf of its inhabitants.

In this matter of Water,—*fons et origo*,—is the source whence to derive it. The fountains, springs, living streams, are to be found, as they might have been years since, had not men been wilfully blind. And there are also, for miles, acclivities and declivities,—the slopes of the eternal hills,—strong enough to withhold an ocean and clean enough to ensure against pollution. The only doubt of the writer is, not that the wit of the Worcester County man cannot invent an adequate system of dams: but whether penuriousness in the shire-town, or elsewhere, may not prefer to scrimp rather than to secure. There are few who share his enthusiasm in reference to the infinite possibilities of Tatnuck *Brook*. But his faith is implicit, that, the work of man not failing, nor falling short; the Valley of the Tatnuck, between the slopes of Asnebumskit and Stone-House *Hill*, and thence downward 247.24 feet, can store up more than a sufficiency of water to supply the legitimate uses of a moiety of the Towns in Massachusetts along and adown the Blackstone. The other towns

will,—the writer without positive knowledge, thinks that they can ; meet their necessities, as they arise, from other and independent sources of supply.

In this vision of the future, the Mill “Privilege” disappears. Aquâ-facture dies, and yet lives : it ceases to turn wheels, — *ex mero motu* ; — but, heated and compressed, its forces impel machinery, make fortunes, nor mar neighborhoods. The dam subsides, the brook ripples on, industry prospers, and no man is worse off. The pipe or conduit, whichever is preferred, conducts water from the Apennines to Rome : perhaps in this day and generation we should say from Asnebumskit to Millbury and Tasseltop. But the *Cloaca Maxima* is never diverted from the Tiber.

The doctrine of a resumption of the streams is revolutionary — is it ? Yet Worcester — whether City or County — is not apt to be scared by the *dicta* or rescripts of prerogative. If revolutionary, the revolt is in the interest of the general welfare. To allow Spencer, Milford, Clinton, Westborough ; — aye, and sooner than they now realize, Millbury ! with her neighbors adown the Blackstone ; to furnish themselves with water nor suffer from thirst : because, forsooth, one or a dozen pioneers captured a mill “privilege” in a foray upon a new continent, nor lost it by stress of weather on the middle passage, by gravitation, or by surfeit of tariff.

The annals of personal liberty, in this Commonwealth, narrate that a poor negro, suing for the absolute rights of manhood, without regard to color, race, or previous condition of servitude, had them established by his counsel, — a jurist from Worcester.

The history of individual freedom of conscience, in Massachusetts, if ever truly written, will date the emancipation of her “plain people,” from the pitiless rule of a hierarchy ; that compelled a man to pay for the support of public worship in the Old South, when he had erected an altar to his God in the New North ; to the untiring labors of that same man, upon whose shoulders were largely heaped the cares of State ; the habilitation of a Party ; and, — properly estimating the subsequent development of the Louisiana Purchase, — the growth

of a continent. But yet he found leisure to build a conduit from the *Hermitage Pond*; to drain *Beaver Brook* at its flood; and to dyke, for the purposes of irrigation, that stream, and the *Blackstone* in *Quinsigamond Village*. It might almost seem that it should not have been left to the grandson of him — perhaps the most remarkable man, in all respects, that Worcester ever had in her service, to proclaim in this way his praises. As Scholar, or Jurist, his eulogy would not be attempted. But the Farmer, or Engineer, who can cultivate or survey the *Blackstone* intervale, below the wire mill at *Quinsigamond Village*, without finding permanent traces of what *Attorney-General Lincoln* had done, well nigh a century since, must be blinder than a mole, or than a professional expert in sewage as it affects the public health.

And perhaps therefore it happened naturally that when a question was raised in the *Great and General Court*, by some favorites of especial “privilege” as against the common easement; whether the Divine Law of Gravitation should be suspended or set aside and the man-made order of artificial dams, mill settling-ponds, and stagnating water, substituted; the flame that had smouldered so long burst forth into new life:

E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

The facile concession of liability; or the readier assumption that a liability would be admitted because claimed; induced the preparation of the subjoined dogma, which was soon after published at the suggestion of the gentleman\* to whom it had been addressed:—

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS UPON THE PETITION OF C. D. MORSE, *et als.*, TO “REGULATE THE DISCHARGE OF SEWAGE INTO THE BLACKSTONE.”

Inevitable necessities attach to and burden human nature. What shall become of such *excreta*? Nature solves the problem by a resolution. The snow, and rain-fall; the swollen brook, and over-flowing river; unobstructed; bear with them to the ocean, simultaneously, the nuisance and the difficulty of dealing with it.

I say — unobstructed. The natural water-course scours itself. If *detritus* lodges against a casual obstacle, forming a bar; the next

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\* Frank P. Goulding, Esq., *City Solicitor*.

flood will cut out a new channel. But a succession of dams, such as the Blackstone is vexed withal, stifles the current and stagnates the very water, — rotting out its life.

It may have been essential, *ab initio*, to foster manufactures even to the temporary surrender of our streams. But, — A. D. 1881, the Tariff may be trusted for stimulus, and steam substituted for the intermittent and confessedly inadequate forces of Water. Class legislation has exhausted its possibilities: the People would resume their own!

Man can only quench his thirst at the fountain-head. Whatsoever impurities are cleansed from his daily walk, or occupation, are borne, when not impeded, straight to that ocean — whose salt has lost no savor. Stored up at the fountain-head water furnishes sustenance for humanity. When man has done with it, it is carried under the Providence of God to form new continents; — the prospective Utopias of future republics.

Nothing is simpler than the early usurpation of water-courses. Corn must be ground; and the whole neighborhood profited by the grist. Logs must be sawed; or an entire settlement go houseless. The dam once built, — there was no need to search far for the site of the woollen-mill when the merino had found a congenial home on our pleasant hills.

But old things have passed away, and all new things should conform to the altered conditions. The rights, or privileges, of a few have become inconsistent with the existence of the many. A great city has grown up, — at the head-waters of the Blackstone: and the calls of its nature for obvious relief are too imperative to be disregarded. Regulate the discharge of sewage into the River, if you will; by providing that dams shall no longer impede the Water-ways! Let not man longer countervail the goodness of God for his own selfish purposes! Revoke all special privileges or concessions in derogation of Common Right! that the People may once more enjoy their own. It is not a military necessity as yet, like that which unshackled the African. Is it hopeless to expect that the prescience of the General Court may settle the question; ere, like other matters to whose decision man has proved unequal, it is cast into the scale of the heaviest battalions.

Respectfully submitted,

(by)

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN.

*Worcester, Massachusetts, March 2d, A. D., 1881.*

Had it been an object to draw the fire of the monopolists, it was fully achieved by that publication. There was a rush upstream, into print, and fiercer than the torrent anticipated by the Seer from a demolition of the dams. "Some therefore cried one thing and some another;" but high over all was resonant the hoarse clamor of a former generation; which had thriven upon government contracts, and in whose houses a mill "privilege" was ever a "handy thing"; crying out,—"Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." Puzzle your brains, honest farmers! Struggle and writhe in the toils that have been woven around you, helpless communities! The produce of the farms is depreciated by bounties upon growth,—foreign or remote. Towns and cities gaze with patient stolidity upon the audacious aggression that monopolizes their highways; occludes their water-courses; regarding human existence itself but as a virtual survival of the fittest to endure, and to consume! Never wearied; but always to be swaddled tightly, in a protective system that will not cease craving to be upheld until thrown upon its own resources and sternly bidden to support itself.

Spasmodic attempts to give away the case of Worcester; with its fundamental law of gravitation; are occasionally noticed. Centuries have intervened between the several utterances. But yet it is a present conundrum in Worcester:—Upon what occasion *A. D.* 1881,

"An angel of the  
Lord stood in a narrow place, where was no way to  
Turn either to the right hand or to the left," \*

compelling speech in these recent days!

Towards the latter part of Summer, the following note was received:—

[*Copy.*]

"CITY OF WORCESTER.

{ SEAL. }

*Executive Department.*

Mayor's Office, Aug. 24, 1881.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Esq.

My Dear Sir:—

The matter of the pollution of the Blackstone River, by the sewage of Worcester, has been called to the attention of the

\* *Vide* NUMBERS: Chap. 22, v. 26.



Legislature by some of the citizens of Millbury. The Legislature at its last session, referred the subject to the State Board of Health, Lunacy, and Charity, for investigation and report. The City Government has been requested to furnish the said Board with the opinion of experts and others as to the importance and extent of the evil complained of, and also the best practical method of remedying the same. It is expected that a committee of the Board will give a hearing in Worcester, in the early Autumn to all parties interested in this subject. I would like very much to have you give me your views, in writing, at your convenience, upon the matter:—one that is liable to become of great importance to the City.

Yours Respectfully,

F. H. KELLEY."

It is not possible to do more than enlarge upon propositions heretofore outlined: and volume is of course dilution. Even such opinions might be out of place in this Report; but for the request of *His Honor*, the late Mayor; and the further fact that the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS have ever expected that their Broad Avenue, to encircle Worcester, should environ the Northern and Eastern slopes of *Mount St. James*, descending therefrom gradually into the Village of Quinsigamond.

"A natural water-course is a natural sewer." So it has been ever since the founders of the Civil Law established the doctrine, by absolute demonstration, throughout the channel of the Tiber.

The contention is, that the Law of Nature is immutable: water shall run down and fish run up! The imprescriptible and inalienable rights of the people are asserted, as against concessions of privilege; whether at any time meritorious or not, now untimely and unworthy of respect. Streams shall flow, in their natural channels, unimpeded by the art or avarice of man. Obsolete contrivances should give place to later inventions; steam supplanting water as a motor; dams being not reduced nor palliated by fishways, but absolutely taken down and done away with forever. The water-course, left in its natural channel, unchecked, will clarify itself;\* when clarified, it will become

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\* The condition of water, whether fluid or in a state of congelation, attracts ever increasing attention. Its clarification by frost, through the long months of Winter, not less than by the motion and friction of a current ordained at the creation, but since denied by private greed, is an element to be computed in the solution of the present problem. Does water when it freezes part with impurities or germs of disease? If, yes? then for a longer portion of the



stocked once more with abundant fish. And it is declared further, without qualification, and with complete conviction of its truth, that nature supplies species of fish to which human *excreta* are not only not repellant, or noxious, but that actually thrive upon it, forming wholesome food. Of such are, among others, our native sucker, the imported carp, and strange as it may seem, the gold-fish. Restrict the discharge of noxious refuse from factories; as you resume concessions, to their proprietors, of "privileges" that have become wholly inconsistent with the public welfare, or even existence; and your problem is solved.

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year, Nature puts to scorn both the guess-work and pother of "*Experts!*" Some doctors of science and medicine in the city of New York have lately expressed their opinions upon the question:—"Can ice" (which is water;—only not fluid), "convey disease?"

An eminent chemist said: "Water during the process of freezing has an unusual power of cleansing itself. It seems to squeeze out all impurities. If you wish to obtain the purest form of acetic acid, you take the ordinary acid and freeze it. Melt the ice so formed and you will find that it has no acid taste. Take salt water, freeze it and melt the ice—you will find that the salt has been squeezed out. Thousands of tons of salt are made in this way. But if you take ice and spray water upon it containing impurities, the frozen spray will contain the impurities still."

Dr. Metcalfe said: "I think river ice is probably pure, because water has such a power of purifying itself. Still, I should imagine that lake ice, particularly that cut in lakes that have only natural drainage emptying into them, would be the best. I do not think that river ice would be likely to carry germs of disease in it. There is an enormous amount of impure ice cut—that from small ponds, for example, in marshy places—but it is chiefly used for cooling purposes in such places as breweries. I do not think much of it is consumed by people. I imagine that the ice brought by any of the responsible companies would be pure enough for consumption without danger to the consumer."

"The subject," said another well-known physician, "is one of very great importance, and it is one which no man can answer questions upon when they are first asked. They take time to think out. I cannot answer any questions upon the subject now with any definiteness. I know that this subject has attracted the attention of savants in France, and that experiments have been made on the ice cut in the Seine. It is my impression that the result of those experiments was that nothing injurious was found in the ice, but it is a long time since I read about them, and I am not certain. My recollection is that freezing was found to force the germs out of the water in the same way as it forces out salt."

Dr. J. T. Sabine said: "I think that river ice is more apt to be pure than lake ice. In lakes, unless there is a strong current through them, the water is apt to get more or less stagnant. You find enormous masses of *conserveæ* in it as well as animalcula. I should certainly object to ice cut in a part of the river where there were dye works or tanneries, or where the sewage of any great city came in. Still water has a wonderful way of cleansing itself, and I should think it would be quite pure ten miles away from the place where such substances entered it."

The clear stream, the swarming fish, the pure air of Heaven, a beautiful and bright landscape, a happy people. *Per contra*,—fewer dams ! of modern structure and profane provocation.

What future do they contemplate for themselves ? these Aquâ-facturers ! who resist everywhere efforts to procure adequate and convenient supplies of water ;—who would contravene Natural Law in a selfish, if absurd, attempt to withstand the Law of Gravitation ; and who apparently forget that “with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again !”

These petitioners from Millbury—owners of obsolete “privileges,”—assert that they have been sick, at times : and they elect to attribute their ill health to the Worcester *sewage*. But all think it worse, *i. e.*, the sewage,—the nigher to Worcester. If so,—the chief occupation of Worcester itself ; instead of a demand for sash and blinds ; should be the interment of its population. And, considering everything, our last state does not appear to be much worse than our first.

Is Worcester to be held answerable because Benjamin Flagg did not feel as vigorous or well, at seventy-odd, as when a young man ?

Shall Worcester respond in damages because medical men fancy that their Town is not in quite as good sanitary condition as when it was one-half or third its present size : although the tables of mortality, in Millbury, show but 74 deaths in 1881, whereas there were 93 in 1880 ! !

Is Worcester to be subjected to the untold cost of repeating experiments that have nowhere proved successful ; because mill-ponds fill up, and streams become sluggish and shallow ; where dams are almost as frequent as the feet of fall ?

Nor is it an affirmation of positive injury to health, so much as a claim put forward to secure ulterior damages. The dis-use of water as a motor, in the immediate future, has been anticipated by the more sagacious mill-owners. The following items, taken from the contemporary press, amply sustain the position of the writer that it will impose no hardships, or tax upon any one, to require a demolition of the dams. Rather, when accomplished,

will the whole riverine population revert to their thoughtless objections with wonder at their own blindness : — Under date of August 29th, a local correspondent writes, from Millbury, that on Sunday the 28th :—

“Hundreds of persons visited the Blackstone River, near C. D. Morse’s Sash and Blind shop, to see the large number of dead fish that were floating down the river. \* \* The theory in regard to the fish dying is the stagnant water. \* \* The Burling Mills pond has been drawn off and no water has run down for a few days past, which has caused the water to be very low, and with the sun pouring down so hot that the fish could not live.” \* \*

Two days later, he wrote :

“The water has been the lowest for several days past that it has been this season, and some of the mills have been obliged to stop part of their machinery.”

Mill-ponds are drawn off, — fish die for lack of water, and lo ! the ill effects from *Worcester Sewage* ! Now for the men who foresee the future, even if they object to relax their grip !

“WILKINSONVILLE.—The Sutton Manufacturing Company recently put in two 50-horse power boilers, and are now putting in a 100-horse power engine of the Harris-Corliss make, which has a 16-inch cylinder and 48-inch stroke. The engine-house is of stone, 20 by 35 feet, and the boiler-house 18 by 40 feet. This mill has now 840 looms, but can run but 290, not having water-power enough ; but when the new engine is set up they can run all the machinery with ease.”

“SAUNDERSVILLE.—The Saunders Cotton Mills, owned and run by Charles P. Whitin & Sons, are undergoing great improvement. They have thrown out 200 old looms and put in 200 new improved Whitin looms ; also, new slubbers and fly frames from the City Machine Works, Providence, and put in new rollers on their mules. They have erected a boiler-house 40 by 86 feet, 14 feet studded, and an engine-house 39 by 24 feet. They have put in two new 5½-feet steam boilers, 100-horse power each, with 122 8-inch tubes, 16 feet long, made by Kendall & Roberts, of Cambridgeport, and a 150-horse power Hartford Buckeye engine is to be put in, and is on the road now.”

“MILLBURY.—A new 60-horse power boiler, from Wm. Allen & Sons of Worcester, is to be put in at the Millbury Cotton Mills, which are to be enlarged by an addition 40 by 15 feet and four stories high at the west end. The picker house at the east end, is to be replaced by a building 40 by 40 feet, and a new wooden mill 65 by 80 feet is to be constructed. The present machinery is to be replaced by new, and 250 instead of 155 looms will be operated.”

There are experts and — ? Say some of those whose experiments in Scientific Farming have burned the fingers of capitalists, and supplied innocent fun for plough-boys :—

“The rights of riparian owners to demand that a water course be maintained in its original state of purity will hardly be questioned.”

*Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.* The title of a land-holder is conceded by the Common Law to be aerial, as well; it reaches vertically to the sky. Yet, we are told, the wind bloweth where it listeth. Is the control over a current of water more tangible than the grasp upon a current of air ? Will the counsel for “privilege,” expert or otherwise, assert one rule for fluids and another for liquids ; admitting, as he must, that both are of the realty ? If the blast comes from Labrador just now, and I want it ; shall our expert ? intercept it, with the healing on its wings, and the ice beneath its feet, because forsooth,—

“The owl, for all its feathers, is a-cold !”

If the stream pours down, in surcharged volume, bearing upon its surface, or in its solution, those elements of fertility for lack of which whole countries have decayed, shall a “riparian owner” of the land (I challenge, in nature and common sense, any exclusive title in a *current* ! ) become a new Canute,—to warn,—*thus far, and stop ?*

When and where do those indisputable rights take their rise and find their origin ? Who shall determine them ? And how ? A pioneer, at the head-waters, builds an out-house that discharges into the stream. The right of a community to build its privies, in that manner ; if it elects such improvident way ; is surely as imprescriptible and fixed as the concession, or “privilege” of a solitary individual, here or there, to dam that stream, check its flow, stifle its current, and stagnate its water. Perhaps some of the dwellers towards the fountain may use the earth as a place of deposit for *excreta* ; the employment of either element being dictated by relative convenience only. Others,—nearer tide-water,—may save themselves any trouble ; availing themselves of filthier corporate facilities. The pomologist in Tatnuck, or

Cherry Valley, has faith in high tilth, and supplies night-soil to stimulate his crops. An Aquâ-facturer, lower down, who is incessantly pouring a flood of noxious impurity into the same channel, implores legislative barriers betwixt the wind and his nobility. The *excreta*,—whether as manure or waste,—is innocuous if unpleasant; the mill refuse is offensive to every sense, and noxious. Where, at last, does that “riparian owner” find himself,—between this devil and that deep sea? Why,—taking his chances; as he elected to do when he purchased his homestead.

A venerable champion appeared in the lists, complaining that the writer bases his argument upon the possible “elation” of continents. In the vicinity, and under the exhilaration of “Tassel-top,” strange things happened of old. And he would be rash, indeed, who should deny that faith enough might not be inflated, there, to stir Wachusett; or, under such “inspiration,” to create a current even in the sludge occasioned by the dams of Millbury. But the writer looked not to “elation.” His faith is rather in accretion. And he condoles with his venerable friend, who snuffs the air from Worcester, as it comes to him charged from over the settling-basins maintained for Aquâ-moture; when he might have the elements of fertility, without their pungent fragrance, were the flow, like that of the Nile, unimpeded. Tossed and whirled among the rocks;\* or fretted around and through the rapids; the stream rushes onward and downward in its task of trituration and comminution. Absorbing, blending, and clarifying, as it flows; so that the purified current would not be essentially fouled, were it constrained to receive, and assimilate, the whole stale hash of exploded experiment; in a saturated solution of encyclopædia and itch for notoriety, combined with the purchased delusions of expert? profession.

The requirement of detached and separate sewers, with elaborate filtering basins, is merely a transposition; not a remedy for, nor a solution of the imputed evil. If, as Mr. Morse swears,

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\* Never forget, O man of Worcester! that the fall from the overflow at Quinsigamond Village to the mean sea level is 438.24 feet; and that there might be, if unimpeded, sixty (60) feet of sheer descent, and rapids, at Millbury!

the offence is rank at his factory, where the water complained of is precipitated ; by so much the more would it smell to Heaven as it is held in suspense, under duress of legislation, in even closer proximity to the swarming population of Worcester. The Five Thousand inhabitants of Millbury are sorely afflicted, according to the petitioners. Their remedy is, to dam back and stagnate the source of trouble as nigh as possible to the Sixty Thousand !

If experiments are to be tried, — let Millbury and her neighbors reverse the Blackstone, Singletary, Ramshorn, and Quinsigamond, over their intervalles, and pocket the profits ! Worcester does enough when she wastes her substance in the effluent stream — for that it is waste, is obvious ; though not susceptible of prevention or remedy.

If the riverine Towns do not hanker after the profits from such advanced, æsthetic if not perfumed, *Terræ-culture* ; — if they will not withhold the pollution, by their mills, from the on-flowing current ; what remains but that Law of the Future, proclaimed by the writer ; urged, because exacted by necessity ; and advocated in and out of season ; — the demolition of Dams and an unobstructed Water-course ?

Says the *Agricultural Gazette*, published in London (England), in an article on “ The Rivers-Couservancy Bill : ”

“ *W. B.* desires to point out that the River Pollution Act, 1876, if carried out in its integrity, would compel the removal of Weirs and locks from our rivers, and then the scour of water during floods will clear out their channels, carrying down the mud, including sewage-deposit, to the ocean, forming alluvial soil in the estuaries. Special machinery may be required for cutting weeds and loosening silt ; but such can be made, and probably before this appears in print will be patented in England, as it has been in America long ago. All that the lowland landlords will have to do will be to raise safety embankments for extra floods, as the clear channels, when the weirs are removed, will carry off ordinary floods, according to Mr. Bailey Denton's calculation that they are four times the ordinary flow, without raising the surface over the towpath. But rainfall calculations should not be depended upon, the better plan being to gauge the velocity and height of the stream at bridges during floods and ordinary flows.”

The work imposed upon the Blackstone, properly dyked, and restored from canal-levels to its old channel ; with its fall of 440 feet from Quinsigamond to tide-water ; is insignificant in

comparison with the task, so lately exacted from the confined current of the Mississippi, of piercing, and dissipating, the deposits of centuries accumulated at its delta. The cities by-the-sea ; Portland, Boston, Providence, New Haven ; pour their *excreta* into the ocean ; contiguity to which is their especial good fortune. We, — inland, — must needs avail ourselves of our natural facilities ; — less immediate perhaps, but such as Nature ordained from time immemorial, and tending directly to the same common destination.

*Dust*, hanging for hours like a pall, smothering the very life out of plants and flowers upon whose bloom and foliage it settles, until every vestige of green is obscured or lost ;

Dust, choking the breath, and filling to suffocation the nostrils, of the tired people who seek the *Park* for that fresh air denied to them in the heated workshop, or crowded tenement ;

With the wrecks of carriages hauled in among the shrubbery, or submerged in the *Pools* ; — were forcible reminders to the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, last summer, that a duty had been neglected. That blame might not be attributed, with justice, — the following note was written : —

“ COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

*Worcester, Mass'tts, July 15, 1881.*

TO JAMES M. DRENNAN, Esq., City Marshal.

Sir : I have to complain that horses are put to their speed, along *Park Avenue*, every evening, in utter violation of the Ordinances ; thereby creating a dust which is destructive to the vegetation and bloom in *Elm Park*, and annoying to those who frequent that *Park* in search of a place of at least temporary relief from dust and heat.

The abuse of that highway, for such illegal purpose, is the more objectionable, in so much as a specially prepared track for horses can be found within the adjoining grounds of the Agricultural Society.

I respectfully ask that this nuisance may be abated.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, *Chairman.*”



The prompt action of the Marshal, in obedience to his oath of office, was met by the subjoined petition : —

“TO THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE

CITY OF WORCESTER.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Worcester, do most humbly pray for the enactment of an Ordinance granting permission to use the West Boulevard or Park Ave (*sic*) for driving purposes the same as it always has been. Subject to such rules and regulations as you may prescribe.

We think that it is a proper place to drive as they do in Boston over the Brighton Road at a gait faster than is now allowed by the present Ordinance in force. And would recommend that parties driving there faster than eight miles an hour should do so, going South only.

(Signed) S. E. HILDRETH,

(and numerous others.)”

That Petition was presented to the *City Council* on the 12th of September, and was referred to the Committee on Ordinances; which Committee soon received a communication, whereof a copy is subjoined : —

“ COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

*Worcester, Mass'tts, September 15, 1881.*

TO THE COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES :

*Gentlemen :* I understand that a petition of S. E. Hildreth, Clark Jillson, C. M. Bent, *et als.*, whereof the subjoined is a copy, has been referred by the *Honorable CITY COUNCIL* to yourselves — without instructions. I assume that such disposition of it was deemed the simplest way of getting rid of the Petition; and that a Report upon the subject-matter is scarcely expected or desired : —

Since the Petition asks exclusive privileges for three or four hundred signers! As the Sixty Thousand (\$0,000) whose names are not attached, after a diligent canvass, may well be assumed to content themselves with a speed, over the highways, of eight (8) miles per hour.

Since the Petitioners ask it to the entire exclusion of others; — as the speed which they seek, even if their animals are unequal to its attainment, if sanctioned, would prevent any person, not utterly reckless of life or limb, from participating in the use and enjoyment of the same highway.

And therefore they ask an illegal privilege; — the highway being merely an easement of the public, securing to the humblest a safe and unimpeded right of transit and travel, wherewith no undue or partial concessions to the privileged or more favored by fortune, can or ought to be permitted to interfere.



And, in so far as the 'humble prayer' applies to the portion of '*Park Avenue*' which extends from Highland to Elm *Streets*, it asks the *Honorable COUNCIL* to betray a solemn Trust and incur a grave risk of Forfeiture. Since the City of Worcester covenanted to and with Levi Lincoln, John Hammond, and their heirs and assigns, that *Elm Park*, as defined within metes and bounds, mutually specified and accepted by the grantors and grantee, should 'be held and forever used and occupied by the City as and for a Public Common.' Wherefore, in behalf of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, I do unqualifiedly protest against the diversion of any portion of *Elm Park* from its legitimate dedication and purpose.

Whether Park Avenue could be constructed legally, across *Elm Park*, with or without the approval of the *Mayor*; (and *Mayor* Jillson withheld his signature), or without a formal concession by the heirs of Levi Lincoln, and John Hammond; is a question that has happily remained in abeyance, but which may demand judicial decision should the thoughtless prayer of the Petitioners be granted. But, — that any use of *Park Avenue*, between Highland and Elm *Streets*, not essential to the legitimate easements of a highway, can be accorded by the *Honorable COUNCIL*, would only be claimed by those who wilfully shut their eyes to that provision of the Charter whereby the 'sole care, superintendence, and management of the Public Grounds' of the City of Worcester is vested in a COMMISSION. Whosoever may be audacious enough to pretend that any action of the *Honorable COUNCIL* can have sufficient validity to confer the rights of the whole community in the highways upon a very inconsiderable fraction, — to the exclusion or prejudice of any, — surely none will claim for a moment that, whether by joint resolution or formal Ordinance, the fundamental law, — the Charter — can be evaded in its plainest provisions, or openly nullified and held void.

I have the honor to subscribe myself, most respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman."*

And thereupon, — blowing of the "hugag" and ringing of the "loud hogannah" in the local newspapers. But a few days had passed, when a poor woman — in the *Meadow* — hoping to earn a few cents in aid of the support of her half-dozen children, violated a State Law and being arrested by the local Police, was tried and sentenced. There has been no outcry of well-to-do people! No petition of hundreds that certain hours may be assigned for the swift sale and consumption of illegal rum! None even of the reverend clergy have put their names to paper, asking that her offence may be condoned, and that she may, — under certain limitations, do so — some more!

The public highways are rendered unsafe; private enjoyment curtailed or prevented; the public property seriously injured; and the Common Right impaired. A mild remonstrance, — and a request that the Municipal Ordinances made for all, in the interest of all, should be put in force, when lo! a storm of indignant denunciation from some who know better, but lack the courage of their convictions; from other some who don't know, and are thereby convicted; and from the general pack who yelp without getting the scent. Not to omit five of the reverend clergy: — blind, leaders of the blind!

There can be no place in the New England economy for the gong-donkey; — little room for the professional jockey, impure and unmitigated, — who, like the disciple of Mahound, makes his bed with his mare; but, unlike the Arab, is therefore the greater brute. We lack, and want not, the equine visage, — the vulture look; and can contrive the struggle for existence without the "straight tip," or "correct cards." There may be fewer men degraded; fewer families heart-broken, and ruined; fewer of our most promising young men enticed and led utterly astray. The whole system is English and alien.

*Anathema! Maranatha!*

If indeed, the *Quadrigae* are to repeat, along that *Avenue*, the spectacle from Wagner's painting, so vivid in Peck's window; the gratification to be derived from possible and expected homicide might prove a fitting inducement to wink at lawlessness. Perhaps keener excitement would be derived, were scythes affixed to the axles, and spikes to the tires, in hungry craving for those women and children who would surely cross the track, in a lawful aim to climb the terrace that impends over the westerly side of *Elm Park*.

Having stood up, alone, to be counted in the negative, thirty-five years since, when a Town-Hall full of his fellow-citizens had lost their heads in a temporary excitement; the writer can estimate, at their true worth, the signatures which are as monotonous as sheep-tracks and equally lacking of individual direction. For a life-time an advocate of everything liberal, all who know him must smile with scorn at the imputation that he

would abridge the pursuit of happiness, or limit any reasonable enjoyment.

Where there is a will may always be found a way. There can be no difficulty in attaining an exhilarating gait, when it is not sought as a merely selfish gratification. But the people,—least of all, this COMMISSION,—will never consent to the perversion of a cheerful enjoyment into an excessive abuse. The sheer pretence that the system of Broad Avenues, to encircle the City,—first proposed in the Reports of this COMMISSION,—ever contemplated a continuous, or even intermittent Race-Track, is wholly baseless. There are, as there have been always, such Tracks; and this COMMISSION seeks not to disturb their use or impair their value. What was intended, for the development of Worcester,—for the permanent welfare of its whole population; which should be diffused rather than concentrated; can best be told by referring to the record. The “second, sober thought” of the community has never failed to uphold that system, many and curious as have been the changes of administration; and it is even now in course of prosecution. The general sense and perception of a permanent need for inter-communication will not be paralyzed by individual greed or pique. The shortest way there shall be the nearest way around.

And the record is found in the very first Report of this COMMISSION, as at present organized, *A. D.* 1870:—

“The broad Boulevards that encircle the fair city upon the banks of the Seine, contribute largely to the facilities of intercourse and traffic. A similar AVENUE, encompassing our own Worcester, would contribute more to the development of the whole city, in the judgment of this COMMISSION, than any other project that has been devised or consummated for years.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“With such an Avenue constructed, there would be an amount of inter-communication of the extremities of the city, as of the outlying but adjacent towns, that would astonish those whose ocular mote is Main Street. That great artery of business would be relieved of much needless yet serious incumbrance: a relief which, attempted in season, can be both cheaply and prudently afforded. As it is now, from Holden to Leicester, from Paxton to Shrewsbury, everything must pass through our one great thoroughfare, wearing out our pavements, impeding our local traffic, laming beasts used for traction and scaring into disease

animals destined for consumption. All these annoyances and evils would be obviated ; all those benefits and more would be derived ; from the construction of the Avenue suggested. So broad as to admit of adequate and grateful shade to ample footpaths ; so thoroughly built as to be proof alike against autumnal frost or vernal flood : a convenience for the loaded team and an attraction for the pleasure carriage ; wooing occupation of hundreds of charming dells and nooks by its ruthless exposure of rustic beauty, thereby benefiting individuals and augmenting the general valuation ; a measure which commends itself in proportion as it is considered : one which this COMMISSION will advocate in season and out of season, living or dying, in the hope and faith of its ultimate consummation."

Some correspondence between the CHAIRMAN of the COMMISSION and his old schoolmate, *Hon.* Andrew H. Greene, of New York, left no room for surprise at the receipt of the following letter :—

" NEW YORK, May 27th, 1881.

*My Dear Mr. Lincoln :*

I send by express to-day to your address a pair of White Swans which arrived at this Port yesterday. Finding it impracticable to obtain them here, I imported these birds from Europe, expressly for the City of Worcester ; hoping that they may be interesting objects among the varied attractions of the Public Grounds of the City, in which you have taken so deep an interest and which you have done so much to adorn.

These birds were procured from the Corporation of the City of Weymouth, and are descended from the stock of Abbotsbury Swannery, the largest and most celebrated of England. Will you turn them over to the City in such manner as you deem best.

I read your Reports with great pleasure, and I desire to express my high appreciation of your persevering and intelligent efforts, amid many obstacles, for the development and adornment of the City.

I am, with great respect, very truly yours,

To

AND. H. GREENE.

E. W. LINCOLN,

*Chairman, Comm. P. Grounds,*

Worcester, Mass."

Those beautiful birds were received in good condition, considering the close confinement to which their long voyage subjected them. For a while they appeared to be content in their new home ; although some fear was excited, by their shy avoidance of everything offered to tempt their appetite, that it might become difficult to supply their natural wants. A considerable

amount of letter writing elicited a singular lack of definite knowledge about the habits of the family of *Cygninæ* ; and the COMMISSION were substantially obliged to trust to luck which, in this instance, turned against them. Since, after getting manifestly weaker, for a while, one of the swans was found, at early morn, but just alive. There had been an unusually heavy thunder shower, the night previous ; and the bird was lying at the edge of the water, just over the iron pipe that leads to the Spray in the *Diamond Pool*. Whether the electrical disturbance had aught to do with its collapse cannot be told. It never rallied, and died at noon.

Its mate survived for a few weeks, in apparent health, but evidently felt lonely. It could be seen sailing around the Pools ; searching the inlets and nooks in a way that was never observed while both were living ; and now and then emitting its natural call. It seemed so forlorn, that the writer felt almost a relief when he found it floating, dead ; although but the day previous it had, for the first time, accepted food from him.

The thanks of the COMMISSION, and of the people generally, are none the less due to their distinguished townsman who, in the hurry and whirl of engrossing pursuits, finds time for kindly remembrances of the place in which he was born. He may be assured that his thoughtful gift was fully appreciated ; and that all, whether children or adults, admired the Swans and deplored their loss as a personal sorrow.

The COMMISSION were indebted, subsequently, to some quite young gentlemen, — sons of Joseph H. Walker, *Esq.*, and *Dr.* H. Y. Simpson, for a couple of fine specimens of what they designated as the *Blue Heron* ; — young birds which they captured while on a vacation in New Hampshire. Perhaps nothing in the *Park*, — not even the Swans, — ever aroused more curiosity and attention. Their grotesque motions and queer antics ; with their devout and solemn style of fishing for their livelihood ; were droll in the extreme and afforded constant amusement to groups of interested spectators. They took kindly to their new home, and were doing well, until a leg of one was broken, — the result, it is believed, of wanton injury. In spite of every effort to

repair the harm, it proved fatal after a few weeks. The survivor is thriving, at this present writing ; and, should nothing untoward occur, can resume his old occupation when the ice breaks up. It is understood that there are more where those came from ; and assurances have been given that the pouts in the *Pools* shall be provided with another rapacious overseer.

*Mrs.* Julia Davis Chandler, of Northborough, also placed the COMMISSION under obligations, by the present of a pair of thorough-bred *Call Ducks*, of Puritan origin ; and appropriately named, — John, and Priscilla. She wished them, as pets, “placed where they will be cared for and appreciated” ; and she will doubtless find that her trust in this COMMISSION is justified by the result.

The new Bridge, intended by the COMMISSION to supply a much needed convenience toward the Northerly end of *Elm Park*, was early completed. It was constructed by *Mr.* Henry F. Edwards, from a design of his own ; and the sole credit for the workmanship, in every sense, belongs to him. Its graceful appearance, upon the original sketch, commended it to the approval of the COMMISSION ; who had only thereafter to insist, and see to it, that the construction should be thorough and secure. The pitch is somewhat sharp ; but there are ways around for those who do not like to go over. And to those who come out for pleasure, a slightly prolonged walk involves no hardship. The elevation could not be reduced, without too great expense for the supply of approaches of dressed masonry ; and the COMMISSION have always aimed to dispense with every trace of elaboration that could be avoided. Turf for terraces, and split stone instead of hammered for coping, suit their taste and govern their preference. Of course it is not meant by this that the evidences of intelligent design should be wholly concealed ; since such purpose would be as absurd as the effort to achieve it would be futile. But the contention is, that what suits a rustic landscape is better adapted to a Park than the more artificial and polished work along city streets. People seek Commons and Public Grounds to be relaxed ! — not strait-laced ! A huge pile of hammered granite, belittling the Ornamental Water which it spans, for those who prefer it ! encompassed, as it may

be, by lofty architecture and massive edifices. But a light, airy conception, in toughest iron, for Worcester; whose applied mechanism, like its rural scenery, is equally grateful to the eye, nor less diversified and unique.

Concerning the general condition of *Elm Park*, as one of the Public Grounds of Worcester; the people have kept themselves well informed, by personal inspection throughout the pleasant season. Its capabilities for a picturesque garden develop themselves more clearly as the past work of the COMMISSION unfolds itself. Largely subterranean,—it is no wonder that impatience was sometimes shown because results became so slowly apparent. Yet such labor had to be expended; and its task must be achieved, before anything looking towards ornament could be attempted. Occasional compliments from strangers have, not infrequently, gratified the COMMISSION. But, welcomer than aught else has ever been the appropriation of their fellow-townsmen, with whose lot their own is cast; and for whom and whom alone would they undergo the fatigue and exposure exacted in the proper discharge of duty.

In the recent Inaugural Address of *His Honor*, the present Mayor, occurs the following passage:

“In 1854 I advocated the purchase of Elm Park. The land was secured, not without opposition in the City Council.

To-day I venture to suggest that the City ought to own a large and inexpensive tract of land, beyond the mile circle, for the park of the future. There ought to be some extensive grounds near the City proper, where the public could enjoy the free air of hill and dale without being trespassers,” etc.

It is of happy augury that the reminiscence of a former service, by *His Honor*, should coincide with his return, through the favor of his fellow-citizens to a post where his little finger may be thicker than were his loins before. His advice is well-put and terse. It is a disgrace and shame that the acquisition of Public Grounds for the future Worcester should be delayed past opportunity—almost hope! present or prospective. Debt has nothing to do with the question, except as an option of immediate, or deferred, payment for the land desired and taken. If we go on as heretofore; putting off until to-morrow when now is



the accepted time ; no suitable territory of sufficient area will remain unoccupied. The purchase, and addition to *Elm Park*, of NEWTON HILL, have been often enough urged by this COMMISSION. Argument on that head is not repeated, because the decision of the City to possess Tatnuck *Brook* will compel the occupation of the summit of that Hill for a distributing reservoir ; and the ownership of the base may well fall into the same hands. It is but a question of time ; and it should be of short time, considering the imperative need of abundant water, and the months, if not years, that will be indispensable to render its introduction secure beyond peradventure.

Leaving that prospective annexation to the very limited area of our Public Grounds to the inevitable law of accretion ; as well as to the exactions of an overruling necessity ; the COMMISSION concur with *His Honor* in the opinion that Worcester should own “ a large and inexpensive tract of land, beyond the mile circle, for the park of the future.” And they have no hesitation in saying that such Park should be located by and along the shore of Lake Quinsigamond. They believe that it should be acquired at once, that the present generation may have the enjoyment of it. And because it ought to be obtained at a lower rate than years hence when, if not built upon, it will have a prospective, speculative value, from the growth of the City to the eastward, which is already approximating the most eligible territory. The gospel whilome preached in these Reports is bearing fruit, — some an hundred-fold. Houses are built ; — a settlement arises, — with its churches and schools ; and yet the *Honorable COUNCIL* doubt, or procrastinate, while the people desire action ! If ever a Park, by the shore of Quinsigamond, worthy of Worcester, is to be secured ; it should be without the delay attendant upon an infirm purpose.

It should be an acquisition of land, merely ; — leaving all plans or projects of development to be met by those who moot them ; — in another generation, that may elect to alter Nature, or with which any change shall be deemed improvement. The great multitudes that resort to the Lake upon all pleasant days, during the milder seasons, should be able to step freely upon their own land. The cautions against injury to shrub, or sward,



would be needless there ; upon an extensive tract : whereas they are indispensable upon such a diminutive patch as the *Common*. It has, sometimes, occurred to the COMMISSION that there might, and ought to be two such lacustrine Parks, or Commons ; because of the extreme length of our Easterly boundary along the shore of Quinsigamond. In that event, — Wigwam Hill, with the little plateau at its base ; long since a favorite resort for family parties, and Church Picnics ; would be an admirable selection for the more Northerly. While a location to the South-East, between *Lake Avenue* and the water, would answer the demand in that direction ; and convert the reproach, that the Avenue is diverted too far inland, into an avowed blessing. For it would then become a mark of delimitation, as well as a way of access ; — imposing a fixed and visible boundary, conspicuous and plain enough to impress all with a clear idea of what and how much is the Public Ground, thereafter, to be kept sacred from individual encroachment.

The City of Boston is largely true to its opportunities and needs. It owes much : — but, looking not back to the dead past, it contemplates a brighter and living future. Its debt is considerable ; but something can be shown for it ! Within the last month, by a unanimous vote, its City Council passed orders, establishing the Arnold Arboretum, in connection with the University at Cambridge ; and making provision for a Marine Park, at South Boston, at an expense of \$200,000 ; a Park at East Boston, to cost \$50,000 ; the improvement of Muddy River, estimated at \$200,000 ; and the Charles River Embankment, at a cost of \$300,000. The ability of Boston, to acquire and possess Public Grounds, is no greater, relatively, than that of Worcester. The earnestness of her people to enjoy them, so far as the observation of the writer goes, is decidedly less. Each lack Water ; both have a superfluity of sewage ; and blind guides abound, — following whom they would be found in the same ditch. But insolvency and ruin never afflicted any municipality because it put its faith ; and credit, if need were ; into the procurement and ownership of Commons and Parks. It is a policy aiming towards a higher development, which gives character to a community more directly and decidedly than all its arts

and artificers can do by combined effort. It attracts, — as does Beauty always: and in man, at least, the sensibility and perception of loveliness end but with life. Those whose eyes were privileged to gaze upon the charm and glory of Fairmount, A. D. 1876, would fain behold its repetition, no matter how far short of achievement the attempt might fall.

In the Annual Report of this Commission, A. D. 1870, the first over the signature of the present *Chairman*, may be found the following suggestion, which, in the light of subsequent events, was almost prophetic:

“The opinion of the Commission is decided that the city of Worcester should obtain, from the Great and General Court, power to occupy and possess Lake Quinsigamond, for the purposes of a PUBLIC PARK, without prejudice to the rights of riparian owners, whatever they may be. In this way, if in no other, could the level of its waters be maintained at their average height, thus preserving the smooth and verdant banks which so much enhance its beauty.”

Again, A. D. 1871, —

“The Commission would omit no practicable method of preserving Lake Quinsigamond in its integrity and to that end would again advise that its recognition as the WATER PARK of Worcester be solicited from the General Court.”

And so on, — almost with each recurring year, until A. D. 1879:

“Now, why should not the City of Worcester and the Town of Shrewsbury unite in obtaining, from the General Court, an Act establishing the Lake as a WATER-PARK and vesting its control in those two municipal corporations?

\* \* \* \* \*

A WATER PARK established; and the control over its average level, or volume, vested in Shrewsbury and Worcester; there would be no resulting expense, save at the will of those municipalities.

\* \* \* \* \*

Their possession of exclusive jurisdiction over that lovely Lake could harm no one, and might enure to the common welfare.”

At last, finding that what all have at heart nobody would put in hand, the *Chairman* asked *Mr. George S. Coe*,\* a friend, to

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\* Now of Grafton, — but with an interest as keen as ever of old.

whom the reduced stage of Water and the exposed shores of the Lake had been, and continued, a daily offence; to offer in Shrewsbury Town meeting the following:

*“Voted:—That the Selectmen be requested to confer with the municipal authorities of the City of Worcester, upon the policy of establishing Lake Quinsigamond as a Water Park;*

*And to make application, in conjunction with said municipal authorities, should they mutually agree upon a plan; at the present or next session of the General Court of the Commonwealth; for the necessary legislation in the premises.”*

That vote, after explanation by its proponent, was adopted, without dissent. Still, — A. D. 1882, no positive results enuring to the benefit of the people! The conference is not held, — etiquette blocking the way: Town and City, each standing upon its dignity; awaiting like women, the first call! Meanwhile private greed, which has latterly got a firm hold upon the outlet of the Lake, with its concessions and aggressions of milling; though not possessing what it evidently despises, — the higher “privilege” of citizenship; protrudes its tentacles, attaching its hard, unrelenting grasp to Land, and Lake; now forbidding the gathering of Ice by riparian owners; upon reducing the volume of water to a minimum; and ultimately challenging the very Commonwealth to exercise the right; — its own by Eminent Domain, in that “Great Pond;” and, as strongly or equitably, by purchase, of miles of shore measuring around coves and indentations.

All which is Respectfully Submitted, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Mass., January 23, A. D. 1882.*



**BY - LAWS**  
**OF THE**  
**COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,**  
**OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.**

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1. No person shall be suffered to affix, in any manner whatsoever, advertisements, handbills, placards, posters, or written or printed notices, to any of the Shade Trees of the City.
2. Dogs are prohibited in Elm Park, unless under the direct control and restraint of their owner; otherwise, they will be regarded and treated as outlaws. Owners of dogs will be held personally responsible for any damage done by their animals.
3. All persons are hereby forbidden —
  - To place any erection or obstruction on the Common or Parks of the City.
  - To catch, trap or shoot Birds or take Birds' nests.
  - To injure, damage, destroy or dig up any turf, shrubs, trees or plants, or break up or destroy the surface of the Commons, or light any fire upon them.
  - To deposit any rubbish, manure, clinders, road sweepings, bricks, timber, building materials, or other substances, upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or in any pond or basin of a fountain in said Commons or Parks, or in any manner to fill up, defile, or pollute the same.
  - To place any carriage, cart, or other vehicle upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or upon the foot-paths over the same.
  - To fire any gun or other fire-arm (except of the Militia of the Commonwealth), or throw any stick, stone, or other missile.
  - Or generally, to act in a disorderly manner, or to commit any nuisance, or do any act tending to disfigure or injure the Commons or Parks or annoy or hurt any person frequenting them for the purpose of exercise, recreation, or transit.

Under penalty of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) for each offence, to be paid to the person whose testimony shall secure a conviction.

## CITY CHARTER—Section 21.

\* \* \* \* And said Board may make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust not inconsistent with this Act and the Laws of the Commonwealth, as they shall deem expedient.

March 4, 1874.

## THE COMMON.—ITS USES.

June 27, A. D. 1853, *Aldermen* William A. Williams and Edward Earle, with *Councilmen* James S. Woodworth, James H. Wall, and William M. Bickford, were appointed a committee of the *City Council* to “confer with the Society worshipping in the Old South Church, in reference to removing their Meeting-house from the Common.”

July 11, of the same year, a Petition from the First Parish, was presented in the *City Council*, asking for the “use of the necessary territory on the Common and Main Street during the time of the repairing of their Meeting-house,” and for leave to “turn their House around so as to have it front on Main Street.” This Petition was referred to the Mayor,\* and City Solicitor,† with authority to take such action as they might think proper.

December 26, A. D. 1853, *Alderman* Williams, from the Committee appointed on the 27th of June, reported that they had obtained an Opinion of eminent counsel relative to the legal rights of the City and of the First Parish in the Common and Meeting-house. That Opinion was ordered printed. It cannot be found, however, except in the columns of the *Spy*; and as it should be preserved among the civic documents, it is now appended to the Report of the Commission of Public Grounds;—its most appropriate place.

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The undersigned, having been appointed to take into consideration the subject of the City Common, the right of the city to the control and use thereof, and, in connection therewith, the rights of the First Parish over any part of the same or contiguous territory, do now comply with that request. The difficulties which basset some of the questions that have arisen, respecting the power of the town or city to appropriate the Common for public uses, and the relative rights of the First Parish, and which have sometimes embarrassed the action of the respective parties, result from the imperfect history which is to be obtained from the early records of the origin of the title, both of the city and of the parish, the want of definite limits to the original grant of the land, and of carefully specified uses to which it should be applied. We have therefore been obliged to trace, from the earliest record, the transactions of the town and parish having a bearing upon the subject, and to derive assistance from the usages of past time, in determining what rights exist at the present day. It is clearly to be inferred from the early records of the proprietors of Worcester that they originally intended to make liberal provision for a public park or “common,” and for the support of the ministry and of public schools. For these purposes extensive tracts of land were set apart. And it is equally clear that the broad and liberal views in reference to these matters were never fully carried out by an irrevocable appropriation of

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\* Hon. John S. C. Knowlton. † William A. Williams, Esq.

the lands originally designed for these objects. A portion of them were covered by early grants to original settlers, and when the town, succeeding the original proprietors in the control of the lands appropriated for the general use, had occasion to survey and trace the limits of such lands, over which title could still be asserted, they were found to be much narrower than the early records of the original "laying out" of the township would indicate. The earliest record of the proprietors relating to what is called the "common," bears date July 6, 1669. It is the report of a committee of the proprietors appointed to lay out the town. Among other proposed reservations of land for general use, the committee report, that there be a place reserved in common, near the centre of the town, convenient for that purpose, about twenty acres, for a training place, and to set a school-house upon, as near as may be where the meeting-house shall be placed." It does not appear by the records that the report of the committee was acted upon. How far it was practically adopted, and to what extent it was modified or rejected, must be a matter of inference from subsequent transactions and events. Nothing further is to be gathered, relative to this appropriation, from the records of the proprietors, unless it be the evidence of private grants encroaching upon what may be supposed to have been intended for a public common, until 1732. On the 17th of May in that year, Benjamin Flagg and others "were directed to renew the bounds of the public land about the meeting-house, and return a plot of the same to the proprietors, in order to be recorded in the proprietors' books." November 3, 1734, the committee reported that "they, having surveyed the same, do find 11 acres and 140 rods, including the burial place and the road leading through the same."

That report, and the action of the meeting at which it was made, are important to be considered in determining the questions herein discussed. At the date of this report, we find, therefore, that of the twenty acres originally recommended to be set apart for a common, a tract short of twelve acres remained. Within a few years from that time, there is reason to believe it was further considerably curtailed by private grants, and reduced to its present dimensions. What remains of the ancient Common, and is embraced within its well defined and acknowledged limits, we think we can confidently say belongs to the town or city, for the use of the inhabitants generally. No part of it can be sold or be devoted to private uses. To what purposes may it then be applied? The committee for laying out the town reported, as we have seen, in 1669, that the 20 acres to be reserved in common, be appropriated for a training field and school-house, but there does not appear on the records any vote of the proprietors restricting the use of it to these purposes. And in 1734 it appears that a part of the land had been devoted to the use of the settlers as a public burial ground. Over other parts, traveled ways had been established by use, or by the authority of the proprietors. Since then, at early and more recent periods, the town has placed upon it buildings for various public uses, such as school-houses, hearse houses, a gun house, and a town hall. There was also, in the last century, as well as in the present, a public pound on the east part of the Common. We are of opinion that the town had authority to erect the Town Hall and maintain it where it now stands. We infer this from the absence of any restriction against such use,

to be found on record; from the manner in which the land was controlled and used under the authority of the proprietors, and by the early inhabitants of the town, and from the consideration that it is not inconsistent with the general objects to which the territory was devoted, so far as they can be ascertained, from the history of the town from its earliest settlement.

The remaining subject to which our attention has been directed, respects the right of the First Parish to maintain a meeting-house on the present site of their house of worship, and the extent of the rights of that parish. It appears by the report of the committee of the proprietors in 1669, before referred to, that the erection of a meeting-house in the centre of the town was then contemplated. The committee recommended that the common land be laid out "as near as may be" to the place where the meeting-house was to be built, and on a preceding page of their report they had recommended that "the most convenient place nearest the middle of the town and adjacent to the minister's lot be set apart and improved for placing the meeting-house for the worship of God upon it." The inference is, that the spot for the meeting-house had already been determined upon. It is certain that one was erected at an early day, for we find it delineated rudely on the plan of the Common, sketched by the committee, and transferred to the proprietors' records, with their report. Successive structures of the same character, including the present South Meeting-house, have been erected and maintained to the present day. All have stood substantially where the present meeting-house now stands.

Until 1787 there was but one religious society, recognized by law, in the town of Worcester. In that year the Second Parish was incorporated, and as a consequence the division of the town into two parishes. The First Parish succeeded the town in the control of all parochial property. That parish have enjoyed the undisturbed possession of the meeting-house, which was erected in 1768, and stands on or near the west side of the Common, from the time of the division of the town into two parishes to the present day. The right of the parish to maintain a meeting-house on that site is established by strong evidence of an early grant of land for that purpose, and by prospective possession for a period of nearly seventy years. The undersigned do not entertain a doubt that the right is well established, and is without limitation in respect to its continuance. How far the parish has a right to change the location of their meeting-house, and to occupy other land which was left in common, is a question not without its difficulties. In selecting a spot for the site of a meeting-house, the proprietors of Worcester did not establish its limits, so far as the records reveal their doings. We are obliged to ascertain the extent of the rights of the parish from their occupation of territory and the exercise of acts of ownership over it, aided by imperfect early records. In 1827, and again in 1834, the parish enlarged their house of worship; but in each instance there was an application to the town for its consent, which was granted. On the other hand, the town has, at various periods, exercised acts of ownership over the public land around and adjacent to the meeting-house, taking care not to infringe upon the land actually occupied by the parish, or needed to give convenient access to their meeting-house. The limits to their relative rights are not defined by metes



and bounds, and are not always clearly distinguishable. Yet a spirit of mutual accommodation will easily prevent any collision of interest or interference with the necessities of either party. We understand that the parish have had it in contemplation to change the location of their meeting-house so far as to turn the present front to Main street, and to extend the rear of the length of the building to the east. Our opinion is desired respecting the rights of the parish so to do. And we reply that, in our judgment, the right of the parish to make this change without the consent of the city is not clear, and that without such concurrence it would not be advisable or expedient for the parish to attempt it. While we concur in this opinion, it is proper to add that there is some difference of judgment between us on this point, two of the undersigned inclining to the opinion that it is within the legal right of the parish thus to change the location of their meeting-house, and the other entertaining an impression that the parish has not such right. While we differ to this extent, we fully agree in giving our advice as we have above communicated it, and we farther agree in opinion that the consent of the city to the proposed change would obviate all difficulty or hazard attending it.

The undersigned are of opinion that the parish may at any time relinquish their rights, as they see fit, to the city, to the land occupied by their meeting-house, on terms acceptable to them and to the city; but that the parish cannot alienate them to any other party; nor would the relinquishment of the rights of the parish to the city for public uses authorize any other persons or religious society, as substitutes of the First Parish, to occupy the land thus relinquished. In reply to an inquiry whether the city has or has not any interest in the meeting-house of the First Parish, or control over it for any purpose, we say that there is no such joint interest, and that the ownership of the building is in the parish, exclusive of all other parties.

CHARLES ALLEN.

P. C. BACON.

CHAS. W. HARTSHORN.

*Worcester, December 26, 1853.*

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The latest essential alteration of the Meeting-house on the Common, was undertaken during the ministry of the late Rev. William M. Parry. *Commissioner* Lincoln, in company with *City Solicitor* Nelson, formally protested to the Assessors of the Parish, at the time, to save the rights of the City.

An Act was passed by the General Court, at its session A. D. 1874, empowering the City to acquire and possess all the right and title of the First Parish in and to its Meeting-house, upon conditions and terms specifically stated; provided the Act should be accepted by the people, at the polls.

Under the depression caused by a financial panic then raging, and of a religious debauch almost equally infectious, a trifling majority was returned against the acceptance of that Act. The City Solicitor at the time,\* however, advised the Chairman of the Commission of Public Grounds that the Act survives and can be re-submitted to the popular vote, at the option of the City Council.

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\* *Hon. Thomas L. Nelson*, — at present Judge of the United States Court for the District of Massachusetts.



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

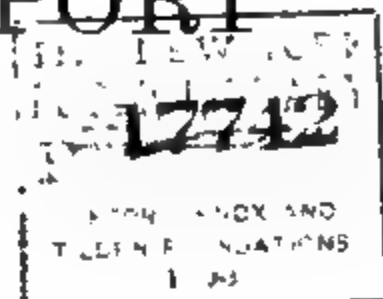
YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1882.

WORCESTER, MASS.,

PRINTED BY CHAS. HAMILTON,

311 MAIN STREET.

1883.





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OF THE

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FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1882.

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WORCESTER, MASS.,  
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1883.

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
~~P 17742~~  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1898.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

## COMMISSION

## OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL :*

A "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same"—during the official year that ended on the Thirtieth (30th) day of November, A. D. 1882, is herewith submitted as required by the Twenty-First (21st) section of the municipal Charter :

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

*In account with the*

CITY OF WORCESTER,

*Cr. :*

By Appropriation,	\$6,000 00
Grass, sale of	50 00
	\$6,050 00

*Per contra, Dr. :*

Human labor (regular),	\$2,254 70
Human and animal labor (special),	236 00
Shade-trees, and planting same,	1,237 58
Tree-guards, and setting same,	569 25
Manure and loam,	479 75
Seeds (grass, &c.),	36 00

Printing Reports, &c.,	
Freight, trucking, and ex	
Advertising, stationery, &	
Re-tracing map and surve	
Carpentry and lumber,	
Hardware, tools, and rep:	
Stone,	202 69
Blacksmith,	7 35
Shrubs, plants, &c.,	328 60
Grain and food for water-fowl,	13 00
Settees for Common and Elm Park,	218 50
Painting bridges, tool-house; and paints and oil,	37 93
Water Department,—drinking fountains and labor on same,	89 03
Frame and glass for map of Elm Park,	13 75
Paving—after shade-trees,	45 25
Water-Fowl,	10 00
	<hr/>
	\$6,088 67
Remaining unexpended and therefore “sunk,”	\$11 33

The COMMISSION have no sources of revenue. Formerly, the Circus, or Menagerie, occupied the vacant and unimproved territory, in either of the Public Grounds; at times submerging a Buffalo; and anon, leaving for a fragrant memento of their visit, an Anaconda which had “shuffled off its mortal coil.” But those days of free tickets and dire tribulation have departed forever. A little grass can be sold, just now, to eke out the hire of tip-carts; but the growth of trees and flowering shrubs will soon cut off that restricted income, as the mowing machine cannot be employed and it will not pay to make use of the scythe.

Meanwhile, novel outlays become inevitable, as improvement advances. There are (the COMMISSION have never computed with exactness),—1 rods in length, of Foot-Walks across the Common, which must be kept clear, by the use of shovels, after the plough has gone ahead. The gutters require to be opened frequently, since their declivity is necessarily slight and the melting snow congeals at the first fall in temperature. The ice must be cut away, or kept sanded: otherwise the free and independent citizen, who endured with passive meekness the mis-



and slosh through which he was wont to wade, before the COMMISSION took the *Common* in hand, will complain that he has stubbed his toe against an iceberg as big as a buck-shot! or has slipped up, *gratis*, when he might have seen stars, at the regular tariff, from the polished floor of the Rink. These expenses, taken separately, are not so very large. But, in the aggregate, they count up. And they have, at any rate, to be deducted from the sum total of an appropriation which, if it is more considerable than of yore, has been by no means augmented in anything like the proportion with which it is subjected to demands and drawbacks.

This Report would be sadly deficient, were it to omit an especial tribute of gratitude to a few, among the many, whose co-operation has essentially facilitated the work and aided to achieve the plans of the COMMISSION. Prominent among them all may be named the long-time *Councilman*—now *Alderman*—Athy. The practical advice of Admiral? Jeremiah J. O'Leary; with his generous gift of the best boat that ever floated in *Elm Park*; cannot be too cordially acknowledged. With the writer, he believes that healthy exercise and enjoyment should be limited to no one section of the City: and, as the COMMISSION ever advocate the complete development and use of *Lake Quinsigamond*, so the veteran Oarsman would adapt the charming, and secure because shallow, Pools, in the *Park*, to juvenile, even maidenly, practice and perfection. *Commissioner* Hall, of the Water Department, has laid the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS under particular obligations. His advice has been freely bestowed,—never obtruded; and his aid was cheerfully rendered when any thing could be done by him, without prejudice to the interests under his charge, that would advance the work of improvement upon the Public Grounds. Where so many have acted kindly and well; whose courtesy and willing zeal it would be impossible to detail; it surely cannot be invidious to specify assistance so gladly extended as to challenge comparison. The *Chairman* must also confess his individual indebtedness to *Mr. Samuel Woodward*, of the *Sinking Fund Commission*, for facilities of conveyance in unavoidable tours of inspec-



end desirable in itself; the COMMISSION have always advised that the neat and substantial Kerb, defining the southern boundary of the COMMON, should be protracted along its other faces, as convenience served and a wise economy allowed. So that when it had been decided no longer to procrastinate the paving of Front Street, it appeared to be merely a careful prevision to submit the following:—

## COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

Worcester, Massachusetts,

June 26, A. D. 1882.

To the Honorable

CITY COUNCIL.—

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would respectfully represent to the *Honorable Council* that the occasion, and opportunity, for a decided improvement to the appearance of the COMMON; in the view of our citizens, and as it may be presented to the “stranger within our gates;” so often anticipated in the Annual Reports of the COMMISSION; are at hand and inevitable.

The Kerb, on the Northerly line of the COMMON, is unsightly and insufficient. A new pavement is to be laid down in *Front Street*; and a new grade should be established. It is believed that the City Engineer concurs with this COMMISSION in the conviction that a change in the Kerb might be effected,—an amendment of grades achieved,—the public taste conciliated,—and the common interest promoted.

For the COMMON is, and must continue, conspicuous: and its deficiencies will ever be more obvious than its merits; insomuch as the penurious, who are also the censorious, never fail to multiply their kind, however so much otherwise they may begrudge, or neglect to spend!

In any substitution, the old Kerb would be of essential value elsewhere.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS submit the whole matter to the *Honorable Council*, in the belief that if anything is ever to be done in the premises, now is the time to make seasonable provision. And in the full assurance that it would be poor economy, with an improvement of conceded necessity and utility; along a thoroughfare, and PUBLIC GROUND, indispensable for the myriad uses of display and parade in this Central City; to omit, or postpone action, because that municipal demand may have exceeded its resources; or this civic want exacts an undue proportion of the general levy.

In behalf of the COMMISSION,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

Chairman.

That communication was referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Highways and Sidewalks which, taking ample time for

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could be acceptable. A notable example is furnished, in the matter of a Petition to the *City Council* for a Fence around the Soldiers-Monument upon the COMMON:—a matter that would seem to be directly embraced within the jurisdiction of the COMMISSION, and which was therefore referred to it by the *Honorable COUNCIL*. The determination of the COMMISSION, as set forth at length in an official note, is inserted here for its more permanent record: a hasty publication, in the contemporary press, being sometimes evasive, and its logic more often elusive:

## COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

Worcester, Mass., September 4, A. D. 1882.

*To the Honorable*

CITY COUNCIL.—

A Communication to the *Honorable COUNCIL*, signed

THEO. M. REMINGTON, *Commander*,  
 DANIEL E. DENNY, *Vice-Commander*,  
 W. W. SCOTT, *Junior Vice-Commander*,

setting forth that as “a Committee appointed by Post 10, G. A. R.,” they “desired a hearing” by your Honorable Body; and further representing that the subject matter, at such “hearing” would be the alleged fact that “The Soldiers’ Monument, standing upon the Common, is being defaced, soiled, and otherwise abused by malicious persons;” and therefore asking “for Post 10, which we” (they) “represent, that the said Monument may be enclosed by an Iron Fence, and guarded from further injury;” was referred, in concurrence and due course, to this COMMISSION.

At a conference between the Committee of Post 10, and the *Chairman* of this COMMISSION, the whole matter was considered at length; the case of the Petitioners stated in all its bearings; and assurance given that no conclusion should be reached until after the fullest and most thorough examination.

The COMMISSION matured a judgment, sometime since, adverse to the prayer of the Petition, but delayed announcing it, preferring to await the reception of designs from a Member of the Post to whom they had applied: a gentleman not only an artisan, but, what is more uncommon, an artist, in metals. Their original decision has been confirmed: and they must withhold approval from a scheme that would exact, as its first cost, a considerable sum from the public treasury; and impose immediately and directly, upon our whole community who have more or less frequent occasion to cross the COMMON, an inconvenience and obstacle to passage, which must be insuperable to fulfil its purpose; and yet not of that imperative necessity whereby alone it could be warranted.

The first cost of a Fence  
set it: there must be:

expensive concrete that ~~now forms the slope from the base~~, and especially must be kept in mind the entire reconstruction of that concrete slope, to the southward, that will be indispensable should a Fence be erected. Since the living must have a passage kept open for their daily needs; and that passage should be as direct as possible, *unless the safety of the Monument is imperilled*. Perhaps so much was implied in the Petition to the *Honorable COUNCIL*, which alleges "soiling, defacement, and other abuse, by malicious persons."

The *COMMISSION* hope, and can but feel persuaded, that, in their earnest enthusiasm for that emblem of gallant devotion and sacrifice, the Committee of Post 10, have unduly magnified the infrequent mischief attributable to chance or time. It is a grave accusation to bring against any portion of our fellow-citizens, that they would wantonly attempt to mar a monument erected to honor the patriotic dead. Far sadder would it be, in the opinion of this *COMMISSION*, were such accusation proved true: for then, not alone would safeguards be ineffective to secure such monuments; but even the Republic could not be held unharmed, though myriads died to save!

Much labor has been expended upon the Soldiers' Monument, since its formal acceptance, in almost all of its parts: very much, at the suggestion of the *Chairman* of this *COMMISSION*, who therefore asserts the right to express a decided conviction that no "malicious" injury has been perpetrated, save, perhaps in a single instance, some years since. And, in that solitary case, the application for a chance to do a job of cleaning followed so swift upon the "soiling," that suspicion was natural and inevitable.

Were a Fence, inclosing the Monument, otherwise desirable; and could all objections to its location be waived, or winked out of sight; it would nevertheless, in the judgment of this *COMMISSION*, be an artistic fault to construct one. At present,—the perspective is complete, with the one, single exception of the perversion of the Statue that serves as a finial. Turned,—to confront the North Star! which was designed; and as it should be rectified; the vision might be pleasant, as now it is not. A rampart would obtrude another glaring offence to the eye, additional to its provocation to acute language because of its needless inconvenience. Obstruction to the human current across the *COMMON* should be avoided as much as possible. Worcester has no higher interest than to keep open every channel; whether of human intercourse and communication; or of natural waterway and purification. The Fence requested would not alone impede passage, whether of civilians in their daily walk, or of the organized Militia in their legitimate "training:" but it could not fail to remind every one, who was obliged to go around it, that the City of Worcester through its constituted authorities, is so far derelict in its teachings at church, or school, that it must prevent access to a Monument of Granite and Bronze, erected in honor of the Patriot Dead, from a vague fear lest some one,—youth or adult,—man or woman, may?—"deface, soil, or otherwise abuse"! And yet it was thought and proclaimed by its Orator,\* that young and old, matron or maid, might love

\* The late Governor Bullock.

to draw near; and, gazing with moistened eyes upon the imperishable tablet, assuage an undying grief with the solace, poor at best,—“I, too, have some share in this!” But, no! they must be fenced off! that the insensate granite and bronze may not, perchance, be dented. Their brothers, and sons, and husbands, might be shot, and shelled, to pieces,—without defence or shield. But the Monument to their patriotic sacrifice must be put in a glass case!

During his interview with the Committee of Post 10, G. A. R., the *Chairman* of this COMMISSION suggested that, were any protection to the Soldiers' Monument absolutely indispensable, the need would best be supplied by the construction of a suitable barrier upon the granite base. A very pretty design has been furnished for such a barrier; to be built wholly of bronze, and therefore, in consonance with the general style of the Monument. Its cost, completed, is put at the sum of Thirteen Hundred and Thirty-Three dollars (\$1,333.00). The COMMISSION, did any safeguard appear absolutely essential, would not hesitate to advise the adoption of that design. But,—being unable to concede its necessity, they cannot ask the *Honorable* COUNCIL to vote an adequate appropriation. Much more,—since not even the COMMON, itself, has been adjudged worthy a decent and suitable Kerb along its Northern and conspicuous front.

Finally,—the COMMISSION cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the Police-Force of the City has its head-quarters within gunshot of the Monument. Theoretically, that Force maintains order, and guards property, throughout the municipal limits. It occurs to the COMMISSION that, if the present members of the Police are unable, or unwilling, to secure immunity for the Soldiers' Monument, to the entire satisfaction of Post 10, G. A. R.; nor less of the community, to whose contributions and taxes its erection is owing; that the deficiency can be supplied by voluntary enlistment. Men being available who will engage, without the inducement of an egregious bounty, to discharge that most simple, but honorable, duty.

All which is respectfully submitted,

(by)

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

That decision of the COMMISSION, having been fully accepted by the CITY COUNCIL; and thereafter by the community, as it became known; will doubtless find ultimate favor even with those who were, at first, inclined to desire, and therefore to solicit different, yet as positive action.

Petitions are sometimes addressed to the CITY COUNCIL, asking for a license that exceeds the authority of that Honorable Body; not infrequently by the ignorant, but more often by those who affect smartness. These, at times, relate to matters touching

one or other of the Pu referred to this Commission premises, in the scarcely c be meted out to all partie sought. Thus, on March 5 of which was in an enti signature, was so referred burden was, as follows :

**TO THE MAYOR AND ALDE**

I Petition your Honorable bod  
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the Petitioner.

Moreover, the COMMISS  
and that his attention wou  
learned debates of the Cor  
apprehend that he might,



listen with greedy ears to the discordant theses upon *Suppressio Veri*, that occasionally enliven the otherwise dreary sessions of the Overseers of the Poor.

Nor would the noise that must result from granting his request, be tolerable in itself. Of that,—the supply is already more than ample, from the Howling Dervishes who “sound the tonjon” upon the steps of the Old South, whenever the spirit moves and the pocket craves. It is their vocation,—not his,—to pervert Scripture, which anticipates the denial of Petitions,—saying

“Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.”

What view the COMMISSION might take of a simple request to locate a bellows, to be operated by himself, between the City Hall and the Meeting-House of the First Parish, is uncertain. At present, the wind thereabouts bloweth where it listeth. What beneficial direction he might give it would depend very much upon his inclination, and much more upon the power to his elbow!

Having considered the matter at leisure, the COMMISSION must decline to accede to the prayer of the Petition. Estimating its pith and point; or, weighing its marrow and meat; they are impelled to ask, with him of old:—

“Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass, or loweth the ox over his fodder?”

“Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?”

*The Shade-Trees* of the City are in their customary condition. Some of the perils to which they are exposed; from the parsimony of corporations or the reckless indifference of their servants; have been commented upon elsewhere. Of mutilation,—by the horses of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker,—it is likely that there was neither more nor less than usual during the year just past. Were the Police instructed to detect, and surely complain, in every instance of wanton mischief, it is believed that the injury to Shade Trees, in all its forms, might be effectually checked even if it were not completely stopped.

More trees were planted by them than in any previous twelve-months; and more of them were assigned to the South where the need of them is greatest. They must be set in places where they will be most desired. Good fortune seems to have been ever; nearly all appearing to be notwithstanding the extreme drought passed:—the severest possible test.

The Commission propose to transfer the operations of the Highway District. They can accomplish no more to anticipate, or forestall, the work on sidewalks.

The experience of later years has shown the value of supplementing the planting of trees with suitable guards for their protection. A hundred were constructed and planted, and the expectation and prove entirely satisfied. After planting and protection, will

There are a few persons in the city who set out trees, set out by individuals, as such has not been the custom for many years. It has been found out, long since, that the only way to get a tree planted is to select certain Streets and set a tree, here or there, to give an occasion for discontent among other things, but not so favored. When the trees are always glad to give, they know that digging a hole, and erecting a guard of planting; and that his care should be given even when done properly. The Maples coming forward, from the suburban districts may shortly consummate a work that, along many streets, is a consummation.

The downright worth of *Sha*

seldom duly estimated. If a portion of the benefits resulting from their existence in our Streets, as well as before our homes or places for business, are measurably appreciated; other, perhaps less directly obvious, advantages, are left for the Scientist to discover and proclaim. Thus, in an interesting paper recently read at Edinburgh, by *Dr. Phene*, on the "benefits to be derived from planting trees in cities,"—he stated

"Among the beneficial results to be obtained, the relief to the optic nerve through the eye resting on objects of a green color. Just that which is effected by the use of green or blue glasses in strengthening and sustaining the power of sight, is attained, at any rate much aided, by the presence of green in nature; and in streets the only method to procure this result is by planting trees."

It was pointed out by the *Dr.*, that

"Wherever opportunity exists, Nature provides green and blue (the latter being the same color minus the presence of yellow), and that as the absence of color produces snow-blindness, and in tropical calms where the Ocean presents only a white reflected light from a uniform glassy surface, reduced optical power soon follows a long continuance of the absence of blue color, which becomes immediately apparent on motion of the waves. So in the Streets, to the occupants of houses having a northern aspect, the glare of the reflected light is injurious; but the effect would be much modified by the coolness to the eye produced by the green of trees. In ancient surgery, persons having weak or declining sight were advised to look at the Emerald. In the old style of building, the Streets being narrow were both cooler, from the sun not being able to penetrate them with direct rays; and less subject to noxious exhalations from the scouring and purifying effects of the searching air to which the narrow streets were subject: so that, while there was no space for trees, there was also less necessity. Wide streets, on the contrary, are hotter, and require the shade of trees to cool them; and, as in the case of London, which had so far done without trees in its streets, it was shown that not only are modern streets compulsorily wide, but that the enormous increase in metropolitan buildings, render every sanitary question one of importance. And the chemical properties of trees as shown by experiment, give them an important standing, irrespective of ornament or the pleasure they produce."

Some of *Dr. Phene's* experiments on this subject have extended over a period of Thirty Years; and he was the first to try the planting of trees in the Streets of London.

Few years will elapse ere Municipalities, as well as individuals, will be compelled to grapple with the abuses and usurpations that seek to monopolize the common highway. The

sky is vexed by a net-work of the flight of birds if not to the atmosphere. The earth is to a special purpose that legitimate uses. Quite recently *Mayor* and *Aldermen* of individual to erect poles that might the better sell electricity seemed no pause to inquire power! Not even a monarch could be delegated! Least not an indefeasible right, municipal governments, any give away what they never

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES, embarrassed, in their care for a cool assumption, on the part of the Companies, that the chart may be stretched so as to do what is doing. Limbs have been in the caprice, sometimes in obvious imperative need to make roads distasteful and ugly at best a beneficence,—never as a

In their latest Report the following utterance:—

“By sufferance of the *City Council* have invaded the City during the trunks of trees, indiscriminate. And despite precaution, protest, aggressor triumphs;—the sufferer must not alienate, nor offend: his take (in this matter—spoils) under his own sake, not his party's: and iron.’ And still, though the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUND Marshal of some newer mutilation from Paxton and overlooks in the old,—‘How long shall be the transgression of desolation?’

generation cometh.' But when it is here, although those who longed for it were not spared to hail the dawn,—neither wealth, nor lust, nor principalities, nor power, shall longer offend. The reign of *Astræa*, for which the blind giant has hitherto groped in vain, shall recommence; and—brightest of Northern Lights! the aspect, prospect, and retrospect, of the popular demagogue shall fade away in a continually receding illusion."

From Paxton and Shrewsbury, over the Causeway and along Lincoln *Street*, the axe and saw have been diligently employed;—perhaps the nearest approach to perpetual motion that our new Iron Age has yet discovered. More recently private aggression has stretched a line of wires along Park Avenue, without pretence of legal authority or even a shadow of municipal sanction. And yet, for the existing public easement in that Avenue, the very men who have thus encroached upon the highway were paid roundly; being thereby enabled, for a wonder! to eat, and keep, their cake. The posts, upon which those wires are extended, are set close to the *Shade-Trees* in many instances; in others, so set that it will be impracticable to plant in the most suitable locations without interference. And here, as everywhere else, doubtless, the axe or saw will be employed in aid of individual cupidity, whenever it shall decide, for itself, that the public use and enjoyment have become inconsistent with its own requirements and exactions.\*

A fall of Snow occurs during the Winter season; as in the order of Nature it is desirable, even if it is not essential to life, that it should; when the greed of the individual interposes, with his crafty devices, the roadway being made to reek with salt, to the prejudice of the feet of men and animals; and to the ultimate harm of the roots of the trees, whose planting and growth were objects of municipal encouragement. It is no longer,—Live, and let live! but rather,—You get out of my way! This Commission, having lived in the past of Worcester; and surviving in undiminished vigor and faith for its future; long since addressed itself to obviate and abate what has been suffered, by inert tolerance, to become a public nuisance. Upon an applica-

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\* The city of Indianapolis gets some return; taxing \$2.00 per annum for every pole erected by telegraph and telephone companies within its limits.

tion from the Worcester Horse Railway duplicate its tracks in and throughout *Main Street*; granted by the Honorable Board of *Mayors*; show cause why the easement of the whole *Main Street*; an easement that contemplates no other charge than that for necessary maintenance that was the free concession (but not dispropriators for the benefit of the whole in be perverted, as it were, and alienated to seeking to segregate said *Main Street* to the putting money in their purse, by one means and transportation, to the exclusion of the public audience, this Commission submitted its views.

#### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS

*To the Honorable MAYOR and ALDERMEN.*

The undersigned would submit to your Honor that advantage should be taken of the present opportunity asked to surrender, in great measure, the control of *Main Streets*, to rectify a former error of judgment.

All the surface gutters and drains of the Common that their ordinary flow, as well as storm water channels along *Front Street*. The track of the horse, however, is so located, that all the dirt or snow plowed, from it, becomes an obstruction in the *Main Street* Kerb of the Common.

Now, why not require, as an indispensable preliminary the request of the Horse Railway Company, that the track be transferred from the side to the centre of *Main Street* is graded, slightly and uniformly concave, and openings into the Main Sewer, there will be afforded relief from the floods which, during furious storms if they are, happily, infrequent.

Very Respectfully,

EDWARD WILSON

The action of the *Mayor and Aldermen* in this suggestion in so far that the tramway centre of *Main Street*, at its intersection

Front *Street*, protracted parallel to the North face of the COMMON. But the elevation, or grade, unfortunately; to amend which was the actual gist of the note to the *Honorable Board*, from this COMMISSION; whether through tolerated assumption, or official lâches, is worse instead of better. The centre of the tramway has been raised, so that in time of flood the surface water is deflected and repelled towards, instead of from, the COMMON. All the salt that is allowed, for the present; all which will be suffered until the people lose patience and insist upon an enforcement of their rights; flows off the crown of that tramway and settling and saturating, saps insidiously, and if slowly, surely destroys the vitality of those patriarchal elms that adorn the Northerly line of the COMMON. The purpose of the COMMISSION was to remedy this; and to anticipate a pressing need as well. Few persons realize the character and extent of the water-shed, whose overflow must pass off over, unless an escape is provided under Front *Street*. All of Pleasant *Street*, from its summit with its numerous influents; all Chestnut *Street*, broad and almost precipitous as it is; and a great length and area of Main *Street*; combine to deliver their storm-water, as they can nowhere else, in accordance with the law of gravitation and with scant regard for public convenience or restriction. Those who have not seen, can form but a shallow estimate of the flood that rushes down those declivities during the not infrequent thunder-showers when from three to four inches of rain are precipitated in an hour. This COMMISSION would have provided for such emergencies. They would have converted the tramway into a channel instead of a ridge; transforming it from a spine as it were into a gut. A track, thus sunken; with the entire surface of a street, as broad as Front, inclined towards its centre; inlets to the Sewer being opened with sufficient frequency along its course; and there would have been supplied a gutter ample for every exigency; an escape for superfluous rainflow; a cheap and facile method of flushing the general Sewer; and a certain protection against possible, if only occasional, submersion, for the North walk of the COMMON. Salt, now used in defiance of law; if its illegal application were not

prevented by the super-serviceable cham  
cism and drought; might at least stay  
or, as it melted without loss of savor, fl  
stone, to the infinite betterment of the M

To illustrate another, and too frequent,

E. W. LINCOLN.

*Dear Sir:*

On Friday last (15th) there was a barn moved  
down the only tree we had. Is there any redress

Yours, &c.,

The signature is not material here, is  
undisputed. Of course the *Chairman*,  
adviser of the City, was able to inform  
the Courts are open to him: a piece of  
have been hugely gratifying. Possibly  
referred, in case punishment was sought,  
of the Police. But the *Chairman* has  
the days of miracles are past. The prec  
cases, is, that the movers of buildings ar  
their license is a shield against misconduct  
appear to realize that the permission mus  
bearing, if at all, against themselves. Th  
right to mutilate or destroy a *Shade-Tre*  
under color of such a license, than they w  
or up-root fences and shrubbery in front-y  
certain specified thing: aught different, c  
individual peril and cost. If those licen  
guarded, requiring people, who would m  
the public streets, to merit that great pr  
inconvenience to a minimum, through a  
the buildings, there would be vastly less  
cause would be done away.

This facile submission to aggression, provided only that it  
sufficiently audacious, contrasts sharply and strangely with t  
harsh exaction of conformity to oppressive and unwholesor  
trictions. As the territory of Worcester becomes mc



densely built upon; and the opportunities for out-door sports are proportionately diminished; it appears as if the officers of the law redouble their activity to repress the natural manifestations of youthful activity and exuberance. Coasting,—a common custom of their fathers, is prohibited to the children over the very land whose fee is in themselves,—if in more or less temporary abeyance. Rather than incommode the Police! it is thought better to confine our growing boys and girls in-doors, to catch diphtheria as it issues effluent from the sewers. It might seem, at first thought, to be easy enough so to guard certain Streets (for not all are suitable, if desirable); that the public easement of traffic and travel should not conflict with the innate fondness of children for athletic enjoyment and wholesome fun. The writer is of opinion that it would not be difficult to demonstrate the absolute right of juvenile Worcester, to a partial occupation of the highway, for the time being, at the least as valid and perfect as that of their elders, whose carriages are more cumbrous, and whose “careless boys” as apt to invite perilous collision.

It would be difficult to compute the amount of harm that has been done, in past years, by the Courts of New York, through judgments so rankly unjust as to sap popular faith in the judiciary everywhere. But recent decisions of those very Courts have gone far to revive the original confidence, and to confirm the wisdom of the Fathers of the Republic, who regarded the temple of Themis as the final refuge and sanctuary of Popular Right. It is not requisite, here, to more than allude to that grand decision of the Court of Appeals whereby it was determined, once for all, that no power or exigency, less than that of the *State! in its direst extremity*, can confiscate, or render valueless, individual property, without compensation to the owner. And the wholesome medicine thus timely administered, by the highest tribunal of that great State, to the arrogant Elevated Railway Corporation, is again prescribed by *Justice Dykman*, of the Supreme Court, in a more recent case of similar infection and virulence. As a matter of direct local concern, which is bound to agitate this and all other communities, more and more,

until its final settlement by the unconditional recognition of individual immunities, it is recorded here in a foot-note that its publicity may be as permanent as the City Documents.\*

\* **RIGHTS OF DOMAIN.**—*Decision of Interest to Telegraph and Telephone Companies.*—*New York, Dec. 2, 1882.*—Justice Dykman of the Supreme Court yesterday rendered an important decision in regard to the assumed rights of the Mutual Union and other telegraph and telephone companies to set posts or poles on the highway in front of the owners' premises, without equitable compensation therefor. A deep interest has been manifested throughout Westchester County as to the result of the action brought before Judge Dykman, inasmuch as in the case of Mr. Strong of Pound Ridge, who cut down a number of poles set by the Mutual Union Telegraph Company, on the ground that he had not been compensated for the privilege, he was arrested for his action in the matter. The suit before Justice Dykman in the present instance was that of C. Coles Dusenbury against the Mutual Union Telegraph Company. Judge Dykman says: The defendant in the action set some telegraph poles on the side of the road in front of the plaintiff's land and residence, in the village of White Plains, without making compensation, and this action is for their removal. It is undisputed that the plaintiff is owner of the land thus occupied, subject only to the highway easement, which, between him and the defendant, leaves his ownership complete and exclusive; nor is it an improper remedy to rid the highway of this burden, wrongly imposed. The defence is that there is a statute of this state authorizing such occupation as defendant has made, and that the plaintiff is, by the terms of such statute, limited to one single remedy. The defendant urges that it is authorized to occupy the highway in question without compensating the fee owner, and that the latter must set in motion the judicial machinery provided to measure the compensation to be made, and await its slow motion. Careful study of principle and authority will show that, under the constitution, the defendant's claims could not be given, and that the statute invoked does not attempt to confer any such authority. There are two great classes of corporations created for purposes of government, as applied to such corporations. The term "public" is synonymous with municipal. Private corporations are created for commercial purposes; they are sometimes made agents of the statute; and, by inconsiderate talking and writing, they are sometimes called "public," but their nature remains the same. They are trading corporations. It is too late to question the power of the State itself to appropriate the property of its citizens for public purposes, and defray payments, and the principle has been extended to corporations created for purposes of local governments; but the reason of this exercise of power is in the undoubted responsibility of state and municipality to compensate the owner. The gulf between governmental corporations and commercial companies is nowhere wider than at the question of eminent domain, and the gulf is not bridged by clothing the latter with a public character by the courts, to enable them to make the exercise of the right of eminent domain. The text writers agree that these private companies ought to be required to pay before appropriation of property. Mr. Cooley, in his "Constitutional Limitations," p. 702, says: "Where, however, the property is not taken by the State, or by a municipality, but by a private corporation, which, though for the purpose, is to be regarded as a public agent appropriating for the benefit and profit of its members, and which may or may not be sufficiently responsible to make certain the payment in all cases of the compensation which shall be assessed, it is certainly proper, and it has sometimes been questioned whether it was not absolutely essential, that payment be actually made before the owner could be divested of his freehold." After quoting various authorities in support of the foregoing views, Judge Dykman concludes by saying: "My conclusions are that the defendant must make payment of compensation precedent to appropriation. The plaintiff must, therefore, have judgment."

The best accepted authority, upon this subject, cited by the learned Judge, thus apprehends the very issue contemplated in these remarks:—

“Another condition is annexed to the exercise of this power” (Eminent Domain) “by the Constitution of the United States, and by that of many States,—a condition which is universal in practice, and would doubtless be held to be always implied in law; it is that adequate compensation be made to those from whom the property is taken. The most common instances of the exercise of this power are in the case of lands taken for roads or canals; but it is, we conceive, quite certain that the principle itself is wholly unlimited, and that by virtue of it any property may be taken by the *Sovereign Power*, from any owner, provided it is required for the *public use*, and compensation is made to the owner from whom the property is taken.”

The *Honorable* MAYOR and ALDERMEN, ever weighty in the law; and whose loins have been mightily girded up and reinforced at the recent Municipal Election; will pardon the writer for the bare suggestion that the People build Streets, surrender damages, or accept inadequate compensation, for their own particular uses and behoof forever! And not that their fee-simple by birthright, or purchase, may be bartered for a *soup maigre* at which even the hungry Esau would have revolted.

It has been assumed, possibly with too much confidence, that Queer Cuss Damphool\* died, erewhile. Artemas Ward was gone and, taking his “wax-figgers” with him, had left an undoubted vacuum. As much however could not be said for Q. C. D. His existence was never indispensable; he did little to vary the monotony of ordinary life; and, if quieted, why would he not lie still?

“—— the times have been,  
That when the brains were out the man would die,  
And there an end”:

But, hark! The following correspondence is published “*verbatim et literatim*.”

“WORCESTER July 11<sup>th</sup> 1882

“MAYOR” STODDARD

*My dear Sir*

Will you please use your influence with our Commissioner of Public Grounds, (the appellation of “Shade Trees” to his title is I think a misnomer

\* His baptismal name, singular as it seems. His parents might well be akin to that youthful matron, who stuttered out to the officiating priest, that she wished her first-born to be christened—Luthy! Thir!”

for he cares *nothing* about them in the Streets and they are being mutilated and destroyed on every hand, a signal example of his "dont care" is a fine Elm on the corner of Pearl and Main which is fast being destroyed by horses) to have seats placed under *all the* shade trees on Elm Park? He has a sufficient number in the open grounds which are not desirable this hot weather but there are many large Shade Trees which are not utilized. For instance some fine large trees opposite the Agricultural Grounds. An oak tree south of these on the Street. Some near the South end and West side and also some beautiful Maples near the Hammond mansion all of which would be desirable locations for seats which would be very comfortable and pleasant for our wifs & children or the tired pedestrian this sultry weather. Last Sunday too many of our citizens were obliged to perspire and suffer *on their feet in the sun* rather than enjoy seats in those cooling shades which cost so little to furnish."

[And so on, in longitude and platitude, digressing to dilute and weaken the arguments employed by this Commission, for the last decade, in behalf of the acquisition, by the City, of Newton Hill.—E. W. L.]

"Very Respy Your

"RURAL."

"MAYOR'S OFFICE.

Worcester, Mass., July 11. 1882.

EDWARD LINCOLN Esq

*Ch Commissioners on Grounds*

—My dear Sir.

I enclose an anonymous letter hoping it will not in the least annoy you this hot day & showing how little the unknown appreciate your good honest work. If you think proper a few more seats would be desirable. \* \* \*

Truly Yours,

E. B. STODDARD."

And that with the mercury at 90°, his waste-basket at hand, and paper-stock in demand!

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS invite pertinent criticism—and trust never to be too old, or stupid, to learn. For no Twelve Years,—throughout which whole period the *Chairman* has been, perhaps unduly, commended by his fellow-citizen certainly never encountering the slightest difference of opinion from his colleagues; not a day nor an hour can be indicated

when his time was grudged to the public service. But yet such yelps are to be expected, for is it not written that

“They shall grin like a dog and run about the city;”

and is it not notorious that our latest civic administration has scarcely had time to suspend its goose and enamel every cheek? The *Chairman*, like his colleagues upon the COMMISSION, has no respect for anonymity. But neither has he pride of office,—save to do his duty fully and efficiently. When he falls short of his own conceptions of what official obligations are, he will not hesitate to step down and out.

Precedence for the insinuation! that “don’t care” is the rule of precaution for *Shade-Trees*. And thereafter, the solitary specification! Now let any man, who is not ashamed of his name, ask *Mr.* George T. Rice, if he had not promised to guard that tree, in his own interest; and if the *Chairman*, tired of waiting, did not threaten to act without further delay? Take the testimony of the late Marshals of Police, and learn if they had much peace from the continual appeals of the *Chairman* for a watch upon this tree, or his complaints because that had been mutilated?

But there is not a sofa-cushion apiece for the people who visit ELM PARK! and as for “Rural,”—he forgot to bring a camp-stool. The COMMISSION neither intend nor expect to find seats for our entire population: they will try to accommodate a portion, reserving room for here a blade of grass—there a flowering plant or shrub. Long before that whine was echoed by his recent *Honor*, *Mr.* Pembroke S. Rich had a contract to supply an additional number of settees for both ELM PARK and the COMMON: the COMMISSION keeping them equally in mind.

“*E pur si muove!*” persisted Galileo: and of course the earth, by its rotation, will now and then tan a fair hide although it may be “trooly rooral.” They say that a goose is the most stupid bird in nature. But a gander,—that cannot, or will not, step out of the sunlight, if it fears to get bleached, will scarcely alarm Rome in our day. There are yet a few, who prefer to surrender their carpets to the light, rather than to the moth; who luxuriate in a sun-bath; and who regard “perspiration”

(sweat ?) as a consequence of temperature, and also as a wholesome sign of sound health in hot weather.

But there should be seats under every tree ! Not if the COMMISSION knows itself. No one would visit a Park that is a waste : and such would soon become that Public Ground wherein seats were ubiquitous, and the ways to them criss-cross and everywhere transgressing. Somewhere must be discretion : a prudent forethought,—possibly some restraint. Yet men, who devote their time and energies to the better provision of innocent enjoyment for their fellow-beings, are not likely to impose any restrictions upon the individual that are not absolutely essential to the welfare of the whole body politic.

The richest joke of all, is the moon-eyed innocence that would dilute the pure milk wherewith this COMMISSION have been wont to feed the community, upon the subject of Newton Hill. Oh, Flatulence ! were it but healing on thy wings !

Yet this is all a waste of time that might be employed more usefully. Should there be an individual, in this entire community, who will devote himself, with a more thorough consecration of body and mind, to the out-door development and adornment of Worcester, than the present members of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS ; upon the recognition of his merit and after due election by the proper authority ; he will find place and praise accorded to him gladly enough, by any of the existing incumbents. His advancement to a position, not exclusively lucrative, will provoke no envy on their part. They will rejoice in his achievements ; make proper allowance for his deficiencies, should he perchance disclose any ; refrain from putting the knife under his fifth rib, while asking—“ Art thou in health, my brother ? ” and strive not to withhold due honor and laud, where merited, by one who, when situations were reversed, was more wont to

“ Damn with faint praise, concede with civil leer.”

Some views of the relative rights of the People, in whom Eminent Domain inheres ; and of individuals, who, for their private emolument, usurp the exclusive use of running streams that were vital with a health-bearing current, only to render them

stagnant, and inevitably lethal by the obstruction of continuous dams; plainly stated in the latest Report of this Commission; irritated the pocket-nerve and rasped the temper of certain men, of more or less consequence, a-down the Blackstone. Their comparative importance is not material to the issue, as it affects "plain people" everywhere; which is, whether the laws of Nature shall be suspended that compel Water to keep in motion, or rot; and make it imperative upon the atmosphere that resumes the water, to blow as it listeth, or to be still and abate its wholesome influence.

The employment of Steam-Power has been tried in Worcester, and found not inconsistent with the use of ample and steady force, with a reasonable return of profit. Boilers might be fed, far more easily, from a descending stream; the help of gravitation, and the re-inforcement by additional affluents, combining in behalf of those for whom no tariff can be sufficiently discriminating, that does not enact a bounty, downright in their favor. But there is an appetite so pampered that neither God, nor man, can fill its maw—ever craving, ever hungry! To such may be applied the felicitous phrase of the ancient satirist, in his description of the imperial prostitute of Rome:—

"Donec lassata, necdum satlata, recessit."

Only, they never get tired! Prohibitory duties are well enough in their way. But then,—they enure to the protection of rivals, along other waters. The privilege of stopping the channel and maintaining a dam is valuable: but then it is a privilege, and not an unrestricted fee. Nor, if it were, would it be estimated at a fraction of the worth that is put upon the claim, cherished by those mill-owners, to introduce a siphon into the treasury of Worcester. Kettle Brook or the Mumford River may serve for scouring the Golden Fleece. But the very sands of the Pactolus that takes its rise from the N. W. corner of Front, and Main, *Streets*, are weighty with the virgin metal.

The presence of Alcohol, or rather its diffusion, in Sewage, in appreciable amount and volume, has been discovered quite recently. During the inquisition by the General Court, last Winter, as to the effect upon the profits of mill-owners if not



allowed to thrust their arms above the elbow into our City Treasury; it was asserted by one gentleman, the "nephew of his uncle," that the Blackstone would run dry, were the dams abolished! That manufacturer is, in all kindness and unselfishness, prevised of his danger. Let Tasseltop once suspect that its sustenance comes down stream, instead of along the highway, and Worcester will not be left alone to contend for her legitimate outlet. Possibly a faint cry may come up from "Tourtellott's," asking why the *elixir vitæ* should be restrained, that this fleece may be sheared, or that community skinned!

But what a theory to be advanced, seriously, by a man presumably intelligent! A stream that has flowed down from its original fountains, for aught that is known to the contrary, since the foundation of the earth, is kept from running out! by a few works of human craft, and greed, dotted along in its course. The Architect of the universe was at fault;—contenting Himself with shallows of sand or rocky rapids, here and there: shallows and rapids over which the waters might ripple and fret, sparkling in the purifying sunbeams, and always in continuous and vivifying motion. He should have anticipated the indispensability of mill-dams; and would have been forgiven, perhaps, had He supplemented their provision with suitable factorics and full sets of ever new and self-regulating machinery. In the Divine Economy—known by whatsoever name in Heathenesse, or since;—were evolved distinct genera and species: in the aggressive and griping greed of the mill-owners,—mules!

You shall have no water! You shall pass no water! Men of Worcester! help yourselves if you can! And there are those among us who would submit the other cheek!

Said CHARLES ALLEN—and his voice rang through the City Hall, to find swift echo in the hearts of the people;—*Bake the doughfaces!*

What is lacking to Worcester; as, in the imminent future, will be to the towns along the Blackstone Valley; for Water Supply and Drainage; is, in technical phrase and common sense alike, head in superfluity. And Nature, otherwise so prodigal her gifts, has not been niggardly even as to that. A veri



flood intercepted and saved, at the Seagrave privilege! would attain the utmost elevation of the present ordinary service; and the entire valley below might be converted into a continuous basin, for filling the pockets, or flushing the stagnant and putrid ponds of the dam-owners.\* Use by Worcester is consistent with every other legitimate use: is exclusive of none. It is simply a public economy, in lieu of private shiftlessness, and waste, which no one has hitherto interposed to check; which no individual has ability or will to stop effectually; but which, controlled and regulated by a vigorous municipality, would conserve and promote the general welfare throughout the whole length of the river, from Stone-House Hill to the tides. In this all-absorbing question of ample and unfailing Water; involving the very existence of communities and, as well, the paltry interests of, here and there, a Dam-owner; those who cannot swim with the current will be swept away. Each year that passes, with its occasional torrents and prolonged droughts, makes it more and more obvious that, even in New England, recourse must be had to an elaborate system of reservoirs and storage. Fortunate is it for Worcester that the trend and slope of the land is such as to meet her every requirement! Doubly felicitous for her neighbors! lower down,—that what Worcester is compelled to do, as a matter of vital importance, must also contribute in equal, if not greater, measure, to their own comfort and prosperity!

The iteration, and re-iteration, that are indispensable prerequisites to the acceptance of what would appear self-evident truth, become vividly conspicuous in this matter of Water Supply and Effluence. Said the Writer, in his Report for the COMMISSION, A. D., 1881,—

The theory that streams shall be arrested at their fountains, and compelled to serve human necessities, may not be acceptable to the few who have checked the current below, and constrained it to grind their private grist. But it is a theory based upon an absolute Public Want, and therefore of inevitable acceptance. Unless there are reasons of geographical convenience and proximity, that may better answer the demands of Millbury; there

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\* But never in partnership with them: control must be absolute, to exclude, or prevent disputes!  
E. W. L.

can be no doubt that, ere long, that thriving town must become one of our suburban Wards; if in no other way she can gain the right to draw from the Reservoirs that will constitute of Tatnuck *Brook*, a continuous and sufficient basin. The surveyors, of Worcester, find that the height of the Holden Reservoir, raised fifteen (15) feet above its present level, would be 735.30 feet above mean tide-water. That Reservoir, thus enlarged, is computed at a capacity of One Billion Gallons (1,000,000,000). It is also found that the overflow of the pond on the "privilege" of the Wire Mill at Quinsigamond *Village*, is 438.24 feet above the mean sea level. It will be seen that there is an almost precipitous fall, in a very few miles, through a valley that would appear to have been created for the precise purpose of retaining Water. If it would not answer to buy out and flood *South*, and *New*, Worcester, we might content ourselves with the level of the Loring Coes-Hardy pond, at 488.6 feet elevation: and the head, thus gained, would start the shingles from any roof in Millbury, if not from the scurf of its inhabitants.

In this matter of Water,—*fons et origo*,—is the source whence to derive it. The fountains, springs, living streams, are to be found, as they might have been years since, had not men been wilfully blind. And there are also, for miles, acclivities and declivities,—the slopes of the eternal hills,—strong enough to withhold an ocean and clean enough to ensure against pollution. The only doubt of the writer is, not that the wit of the Worcester County man cannot invent an adequate system of dams: but whether penuriousness in the shire-town, or elsewhere, may not prefer to scrimp rather than to secure. There are few who share his enthusiasm in reference to the infinite possibilities of Tatnuck *Brook*. But his faith is implicit, that, the work of man not failing, nor falling short; the Valley of the Tatnuck, between the slopes of Asnebumskit and Stone-House *Hill*, and thence downward 247.24 feet can store up more than a sufficiency of water to supply the legitimate uses of a moiety of the Towns in Massachusetts along and adown the Blackstone.

It resolves itself, after all, into a mere sum in arithmetic. How much money shall be expended in building ample and sufficient dams? Dams so built as to be trustworthy for all time;—since woe to the Blackstone Valley should they ever give way! How much more shall be paid for the right of flowage—to the possible extreme! If Water must be had,—and must it not? the supply should be adequate to the necessity that it is

intended to meet. The whole work need not be of a day: even Omnipotence is reputed to have distributed the task of Creation over the major portion of a week. But the plan should be so comprehensive in its scope and flexible in execution, as to admit of addition or enlargement at any stage of progress. The writer has disclosed a vision of the entire Valley of the Tatnuck, from Stone-House Hill to the Coes-Hardy privilege, covered with water in continuous basins, setting back to the hill-sides, if needs must; and, at any rate, so guarded, as to withhold all the Spring floods that would otherwise run out to sea. Kettle Brook resounds with the busy hum of industry. The Tatnuck lies comparatively deserted and idle. The opportunity offers; and man has but to seize it and turn it to his advantage.

Were that Valley utilized, as the writer has so often predicted and as, sooner or later, it must be; certain changes become inevitable. The highways will be carried along the hill-sides, wherever they cannot be made to serve for embankments. The meadows being overflowed, farms would be withdrawn to the upland; some of which is now abandoned to wood, more devoted to pasture; and whereof the whole would be found susceptible of that improvement developed by the mother of invention. The inexhaustible fountains of a Lake, three miles long; from a few rods to a half mile in width; and varying in depth from one foot to fifty; exist, if latent, in the clouds that annually shroud the slopes of Asnebumskit. It is not for the men who sit supinely and gaze upon the torrent rushing over their waterways, to stay the enterprise which would arrest that torrent,—converting it into a perennial blessing. Nature indicates with plainness, and precision, what may be done. Those who are too indolent, or avaricious, to put forth a hand, or spend a dollar, to profit by her suggestions; have no *locus standi*, whereon to complain of a people that are more sagacious and active. For long years has the Tatnuck *Brook* flowed idly to waste. Meanwhile Steam has supplanted the Waterfall as a motive-power; until now, except in very rare instances, it is recognized as incomparably superior; and cheaper as well, because trustworthy always. It is only when Worcester would save what is every-

body's extravagance ; when this City aims to secure for itself, as a vital necessity, that which nobody has hitherto valued ; that the clutch of the dam-owner fastens upon her throat, inexorably exacting the price of existence. With a probability of water enough to supply every homestead in the Valley ; with a certainty of enough to maintain a constant current and scour the channel as well ; and with the absolute knowledge that what Worcester is prevented from attempting will never be accomplished otherwise ; the sullen and monotonous response is—damages for that which you took in your hour of dire necessity ! Exemplary damages for what you store up, and save from the running stream ! Consequential damages for all that may descend upon your territory from the passing cloud !

The voice of John Hook, in the starving camp at Valley Forge, sharing in no sacrifice and suffering no privation, yet ever bemoaning—"Beef ! beef !"

"The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, Give, give ! There are three things that are never satisfied, *yea*, four things say not, It is enough :

The grave ; and the barren womb ; *the earth that is not filled with water* ; and the fire that saith not, It is enough !"

The development of ELM PARK has been so closely watched, by the people, that there is but little occasion for describing, in detail, its continuous progress. That Park is becoming, by a gradual process of evolution, in some sense, a Public Garden. The COMMISSION challenge no invidious comparisons : but neither do they shrink from them. Confessing many mistakes ; perceiving errors that might have been avoided, perhaps, but which were timely rectified ; they claim to have pursued, consistently, the design proposed to themselves from the first, of securing and growing one specimen at least of every hardy Tree, Shrub, or Plant, that could be made to thrive away from its native habitat Hardy ;—because the cost of starting and sustaining hot-houses would be a wasteful expenditure in their judgment ; because the results to be obtained from the employment of such instrumentalities could never be commensurate with the trouble and outlay, since everything desirable can be purchased of domesti

or foreign growers to better advantage; and for this conclusive reason,—that what of charm, or fragrance, can not be found in vegetation that will endure our climate, is scarcely worth looking for in the tropics. The COMMISSION listen, with patient equanimity, when they are told of the gorgeous display of Tulips that may be seen, for a few days of Spring, in some of the larger cities. They lend a pitying ear to the untaught wonder, that strives to narrate the mystery of this geometrical puzzle; or denounces their deliberate omission to repeat, at home, that metropolitan coil of ribbon. They prefer the natural flower to the human conceit: and elect to employ the scanty means at their disposal for such purposes, in honest cultivation, rather than in the cunning or trickery of mere arrangement. Tulips are well enough in their way: and there are plenty and to spare in ELM PARK. Bedding plants may answer for those who overlook the floriage to go into raptures over distortion: and have not learned that everything is perverted which is wrested from its natural tendency. The COMMISSION have endeavored to create shrubberies of the improved *Azalea* and *Rhododendron*; knowing that the Swamp Pink can be traced throughout Worcester as a wildling, and that the first cousin of the latter,—*Kalmia latifolia*,—(Spoonwood), is so common as to be deemed and treated as a nuisance. In old times, the *Rhododendron* could be obtained from Leicester;—the richest, until despoiled and deflowered, of all our Massachusetts towns in a rare and priceless flora. The COMMISSION, until they can get hold of our native species, propose to find out what are the insuperable obstacles, if any, to the growth and multiplication of those grander forms, in which the Belgian and English nurserymen have attained so great success by assiduous hybridizing and semination.

The *Iris*, in manifold variety, with the June *Lily*; the *Pæony*, and *Lilium Speciosum*; the *Gladiolus*, and *Phlox*; the *Hydrangea paniculata*, and the *Tigridia*; are all largely cultivated and, hitherto, appear to have found a congenial home. The soil is so new, and unworn, that growth and bloom seem to be indifferent to minor conditions of moisture, richness, or tilth. *Lilium Candidum* flourishes in a light loam, underlain by a

sandy leach, in close proximity to the Pool  
 nution of vigor when planted in a heavy  
 retentive. *Lilium Japonicum* is equally  
 health;—just as tenacious of life under  
 The *Chairman* has formed a theory for  
*Auratum*, based upon peculiar circumstan-  
 upon his observation. But he has lived  
 that while two swallows do not make a St  
 screeches have not disclosed a panther!  
 may yet be discovered, among congenial ha

What has been achieved, in that Public C  
 conditions, could not be repeated, elsewh  
 desirable as it generally proves insufferabl  
 Park, should be sui generis:—unique, so t  
 and subsequent development; and if with  
 so much the better. The Northwestern at  
*Lake*, “with verdure clad,” is doubtless  
 Upon the route of *Lake Avenue*,—protr  
 gravelly knolls obtrude themselves: but t  
 tion presents the only visible break in an  
 monotony. In *ELM PARK*, on the contrary  
 spot, a bed of peat that discloses no botto  
 fifty feet. In immediate juxtaposition are  
 impalpable, sand; and, super-imposed an  
 the clearest yellow, or red, gravel. Bed  
 firmly fixed as though fused into their po  
 by the advance of excavation; luckily, as  
 construction in a durable, yet economical, n  
 throughout the *PARK* and *COMMON* alike.  
 thus washed the other! had not the Peat,  
 and Ore, been thus handy; and so cheaply  
 MISSION would have become insolvent, year  
 you would construct Paths, a deposit of  
 that must be removed, yet needs no screen  
 excavating a Pool for Ornamental Water  
 almost fathomless bed of Peat; if, in sh  
 theretofore “without form, and void,” yet

light loam above and a porous leach beneath ; you may felicitate yourself upon your lucky star ! rest assured that you are in ELM PARK ! and realize, to a blessed certainty, that all parties to the conveyance, thirty years ago, (an entire generation !) grantors and grantee alike, builded better and wiser than they knew.

Yet,—so long as anything further can be achieved, the COMMISSION will continue dissatisfied : they are their own severest critics. They look upon the green lawns and gleaming water ; the blossoming shrub and the fragrant flower ; the Pools, the Waterfowl and the lone Fisher\* ; not to omit the boats for exercise or recreation ; the groves of natural Oaks, with those which were planted under their supervision ; the broad landscape, stretching in an unbroken curve and far perspective, from Lincoln to Coes Square ; with Schools and Hospitals, the tall chimnies of factories and the spires of Meeting-Houses, adding diversity to the fore ; while the simple symmetry of Newton Hill completes the back-ground : but still their self-appointed stint falls short of perfection. They have been unable, as yet, to provide and maintain Skating in the open, out-door air, such as they, long since, established in imagination ; and of which, in actual accomplishment and use, they do not now and mean never to despair. Sporting, in boyhood, over the frozen overflow, from North of Highland *Street* down through the Flagg meadow, to the flume of Gov. Lincoln by the edge of the present Russell *Street* ; an enjoyment to share in which, with his pupils, when the writer reported the surface glairy, George Folsom used to dismiss school ; they positively long to perpetuate a stirring and healthy combination of exercise and pleasure ;—to which the wooden floor, the artificial light, the foul air, and the charge for admission, compare, as do the farthing rush-light to the luminous moon,—the limitations of the meagre purse to the unrestricted bounty of nature ! Some more length of pipe, which the COMMISSION will try to scrimp from their appropriation, should they get what they have asked for the current year ; a little spray from the clouds, after their condensation by that relic of Mediævalism—the mill-owner ; and their subsequent appropriation, to

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\* *Ardea herodias*.



its own uses, by that hive of industry—the modern city; a few casual jobs of employment for the faithful men whose sinewy hands have built ELM PARK; and the problem is solved. With nearer six than five superficial acres the Pools, even now, can scarcely accommodate the crowds that seek a temporary enjoyment. Thoroughly opened up, and with the ice kept clear, the test of another winter might indicate necessities constraining remedy.\* If remedy, after all, should prove hopeless, the policy of a further enlargement of the water area could be considered; there being somewhat more than an acre that the COMMISSION might; were the want imperative, as they have trusted it would not become, excavate and transform. So long as Newton Hill rears itself, in immediate proximity, there can never be too great an expanse of Water. Since the form and bulk of an eminence, thus uplifted towards the sky in a landscape otherwise monotonous, will ever supply the indispensable counterpoise and foil.

The COMMISSION have invited attention, in former Reports, to the numerous Squares and Spaces at the intersection of highways, that are left desolate, when they might be improved at a slight expenditure of money and labor. A long list of those gores and jags of land, varying in area as in prominence, was given quite recently; which it ought not to be necessary to repeat, here. Such utter abandonment, surely, will not be tolerated, always. Take, for example, the extensive triangle where Cambridge, and Millbury, *Streets*, unite; a vicinity in which the speedy location of School, and Engine, Houses, is planned, if not already ordered. A noble *shade-tree* that ought to be made perfectly secure, but which cannot be properly

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\*But the children, even if of larger growth; the boys and girls,—should such old appellations be not wholly obsolete; must tag after, and not anticipate the COMMISSION. In this matter, especially, does haste make waste. Twice already, in this young Winter, the very eagerness of youth without distinction of sex, to clear the surface of the pools, has over-reached itself. The slosh, shovelled into ridges, remains heaped up during thaw or rain; forming, as frost supervenes, an ugly, almost insuperable barrier when otherwise, the surface would be smooth and unbroken. The practice of the COMMISSION has shown, and its motto might well be, that

“ Patient waiters are no losers ! ”



guarded by this COMMISSION, so long as it is comprehended within the unrequired location of the roadway. They have not forgotten the wanton demolition, by the fast-trotting squad of the Highway Department, of that grand Elm, in *Park Avenue*, at its junction with *Salisbury Street*, felled before sunrise by those "six sharp axes!" At *Whitney Space*,—there should be a Kerb, a grass plat and a Jet d'Eau in the centre; whose spray might nourish verdure, while its overflow supplied fountains wherefrom man, and his subject animals, could allay their thirst in the parching heats of Summer. There may be such a thing as the enforcement of a *too-total* abstinence.

The COMMISSION would not fail to declare, thus publicly, their gratification at the signal improvement in the appearance of *Grant Square*, which, though owned in private, is yet substantially dedicated and thrown open to public enjoyment and use. In planning the work of renovation, as well as in superintending the actual operations, the energy and good judgment of *Councilman Harrington* became markedly conspicuous. It furnishes a most striking illustration of what might be accomplished, in dozens of other places, throughout the city; so that only the task be not postponed until the earth has been buried beneath brick and mortar, or is converted into pasturage for the golden calf.

Where shall the youth of Worcester, in future years, its young men and maidens, obtain and possess the right to outdoor exercise, and to the enjoyment of athletic sports, with the least possible restriction? Without such enjoyment they are liable to grow up awkward and nerveless; and thereafter to crown the process of scholastic evolution by degeneration into intellectual eunuchs. They must not coast! their sleds will collide with teams in transit, when there is not as there might be always, at some slight expense and trouble, an authorized and trusty outlook. They cannot skate! for snow falls; and the expenditure of money to keep clear and smooth the surface of the Pools, in *ELM PARK*, would be denounced as shiftless waste by Gradgrind, as he rakes in the profits from monopoly, spawned from the incestuous union of patent and protection.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS might weary in well-doing, had they not enlisted for life; and were not the cause deserving of their every energy. Boys and girls appeal to them, incessantly, for space wherein they may be allowed to play: but all through the city, their response must be, ever the same,—ungracious,—We have no room for you! Long years ago the use of the loaded base-ball, within the Public Grounds, was sternly forbidden by Municipal Ordinance. There are no superfluous acres convenient, and unoccupied, for Foot-Ball, or Lacrosse. Perhaps, in some secluded nook, scant space and verge might be assigned for that unique but melancholy stag-game, which, at the intersection of Oread *Place* with Main *Street*, in ages long ago, nightly renewed during the rutting season of Croquet, appeared to develop for all,—alike player or spectator,—a grim sense of dolorous enjoyment.

Worcester continues to expand and thrive, as we all wish may be its fortune forever. But, all the while, the territory is built upon; purchased for improvement in the near future; or monopolized for ultimate speculation. In the hurry and rush of business, who can stop to think of his own, or another's children, rigidly limited to the scrimped area of an ordinary house-lot; or cabined, cribbed, confined within the reeking walls of a crowded tenement-house! Mammon pursues his march,—greedy, insatiable; now and then protruding feelers to test the public pulse, as he even seeks the right of transit across the COMMON; cloaking the naked skeleton of his avarice beneath the transparent veil of an alleged imperative necessity. And no one pauses to reflect whither all this tends: to what it inevitably leads.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS would deem that they had worn out patience, and exhausted importunity, were their faith in the People less entire. But they know that no expenditure would be more cheerfully sanctioned, by those who have to pay a larger moiety of the taxes, than that which should make prompt provision for convenient and suitable play-grounds: ample and accessible COMMONS, or PARKS. And they know further,—what must be obvious to all,—that the opportunity to make such provision is rapidly passing away, as settlement

encroaches upon vacant territory ; and speculation reaches out anticipating settlement. If the citizens of Worcester desire to convert their beautiful City into a mere pile of buildings ; where the brick shop shall frown upon the wooden shanty, smoke and grime pervading and oppressing both alike ; where the blooming gardens, once so frequent, shall be given up, because they cost too much to maintain or the land is too valuable ; where there shall be no COMMON, because it is coveted for *Streets*, and no PARKS, since there is no money in the Treasury wherewith to buy them, and the time will never come when there will be funds on hand for such a purpose ; then it would seem that their wish is in a fair way to be gratified. No man in authority manifests the courage of his convictions, in this matter, fearing, and by the very display of such fear ensuring, the loss of popularity. For the People ever detect and mistrust the man of infirm will, or weak purpose ; and are invariably ready, and even eager, to follow an audacious, if wise, leader. No man will lose caste in Worcester,—more than in Philadelphia, New York, or Boston,—who appreciates and makes the most of his opportunity, when it occurs, to provide for an imminent public need. Are there none in the City Council, at present, who dare to initiate, and push to a successful consummation, such measures as shall result in a suitable supply of Public Grounds for this prosperous and rapidly-growing City ?

If such Grounds ;—call them Parks, as you elect, although this COMMISSION will ever prefer the explicit and time-honored title of—COMMONS— ; shall not be acquired now, or measures taken for their timely procurement ; when, in the name of any rational enjoyment this side of the grave, will occasion serve better ? You are ready to introduce a new Water service, insisting only that the supply shall be adequate : and may have, at any time, to spend untold sums, in the ordinary event of the casual fracture of a main ; or to secure from the plague of a Drought, which is only not extraordinary since it has ceased to be exceptional. You under-run the earth with sewers, projecting them for miles ; piercing channels for a sluggish stream, compared, not inaptly, to the Styx, and only dissimilar, because the principal channel of that

fabled river in the classic hell was woefully lacking in dams! You erect School-Houses, more or less, annually, buying generous tracts of land for play-grounds: and, each year thereafter, you contract the open space by constructing new rooms to be added to the original edifice. It saves, in one sense, to cover the school-yard with brick and mortar. But, how is it with the Doctor's bill? At this time of writing, the yard of the Winslow *Street* School-House is marked for further encroachment. Does land cost so much, in that part of the City, that a new and separate lot cannot be obtained? Why not take a lesson from the Highway Department, improving upon the instruction? Why not purchase acres of gravel, skinning the surface for re-imbursement, and reserving the subsoil and fee-simple for an untaught generation!

Nothing can compare, in possible variety of use and enjoyment, with a Water-Park, which affords boating in summer and skating in winter. If, however, you can add to this the grove and lawn; the sunny nook or umbrageous copse; what is left to desire? Therefore has it been, for years, that this COMMISSION ceased not to urge upon the *Honorable* COUNCIL to lose no time in gaining possession of the western shore of *Lake Quinsigamond*, northward of the causeway: and influenced by such views was it that the subjoined note was prepared and submitted:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 19th, A. D. 1882.

To the *Honorable* CITY COUNCIL—

The undersigned, *Chairman* of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, respectfully sets forth that, A. D. 1873, a Decree was adopted by the *Honorable* COUNCIL locating and establishing what has since been known, by lawful denomination, as *Lake Avenue*:—

That a portion of said Avenue has been worked and converted to the public enjoyment and use;—

That, although to some extent originally perverted from its direct and, to a lesser degree, neglected in its immediate and obvious purpose; construction has thoroughly justified itself, by the diversion, from the dense settlements of the City, of some portion of the population, which has been thus enabled to find, in the neighborhood of *Lake Quinsigamond*, pleasant resorts and cheaper as well as healthier homes. The aggregate municipal deriving a sufficient return in the resultant taxation upon the improve-

that it invited, with the reluctance characteristic of all similar bodies politic:

And the undersigned would further represent that the Location of said Lake Avenue is binding and conclusive. As well upon the Commonwealth, which conceded the right of way through and throughout its domain; as well upon individuals, who granted like and equivalent concessions; as upon the City which, having realized benefit from enterprise consequent upon its former action, is bound, alike in honor, and by a clear perception of its opportunities, to complete its engagements.

Wherefore the undersigned petitions the *Honorable CITY COUNCIL* to order the construction, during the current winter, of so much of Lake Avenue, as may be comprised within the Location, already decreed and on file, as extends from Belmont *Street*, northwardly; to its intersection with Lincoln *Street*;

To the end that the western shore of *Lake Quinsigamond* may be thrown open once more to the People, and rendered as freely accessible as when the title to the land was vested in individual farmers!

And with the ulterior purpose and ultimate aim, when said Lake Avenue shall have been thus extended and constructed, of obtaining from the Commonwealth, perhaps also from individual owners, all the land lying between said Avenue and Lake for the common enjoyment and use, in perpetuity, as a PUBLIC PARK, or COMMON.

Very respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

It is not so very long since that shore was a favorite resort of our whole community; when the name and fame of Regatta Point was bruited throughout the Republic. Boating may have fallen into temporary disrepute: but the Lake and the landscape continue, in perennial beauty, enticing casual visitors and inviting the not infrequent picnic. Still it is felt to be an intrusion; and only not a trespass because the land belongs to the Commonwealth. Now why should it not become the property of the People? with absolute freedom to come and go;—to stay, or keep away. Its use and enjoyment, as a PUBLIC PARK, would injure no one; and need not diminish any essential privileges of the Hospital. The extension of Lake Avenue would supply a convenient and ineffaceable line of demarkation between the absolute territory of the Commonwealth, wherefrom it might be desirable to exclude the community. At the same time there would be provided a way of inter-communication, and transport, to and from the Northern and Southern extremities of that vast

domain; obviating, in a measure, the need of cart-paths and lanes, which are always a nuisance wherever they are not indispensable. Seeking no selfish or exclusive occupation, there can be no good reason why the City should not be able to acquire the title of the Commonwealth upon reasonable terms. It would be monstrous,—were our People to be debarred from an enjoyment, almost their own by prescription, because an edifice, upon a remote summit within those broad acres, is thronged with the irrational and demented! A COMMON does not mean, and cannot be made to intend, monopoly. Every inmate of the Hospital, permitted to be at large and to mingle with his fellow-men, would retain all the rights that he now has: but the community in general would feel a new and complete sense of freedom, where they are now galled by a perception, however faint or impalpable, of simple sufferance.

The most frequent objection to an extension of Lake Avenue, northward, is that the location of the road-way so far as constructed, to the south of Belmont *Street*, was diverted to such a distance inland from the Lake. Without stopping to inquire into the fact, or its latent causes, it is sufficient to know that a remedy for that oversight, or deliberate perversion, is easily found. The Decree, establishing that Avenue, provides for a Bridle Path, forty feet wide, by the shore of the *Lake*, which can be built at any time and the main road discontinued upon its completion. In this way some expense of maintenance might be saved; the original plan of this COMMISSION fulfilled; while simultaneously the water-scape would be developed in all its natural beauty. The weakest occupation in which grown men can waste time is, — whining over mistakes that they have the power to correct and redress.

The reply to a request for certain views of the COMMISSION, as expressed in its Reports upon this whole subject, may be found subjoined: and, in said reply, a suggestion for the requisite legislative action. It would seem most advisable, however should it be determined to establish a PARK along the Western shore of *Lake Quinsigamond*; obtaining therefor the superfluous land of the Commonwealth; to make the project s

comprehensive as to embrace the grander idea of a WATER-PARK: and to solicit, at one and the same time, whatever and all the legislation that might be necessary.

## COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 17, A. D. 1881.

Col. E. B. STODDARD, *Mayor Elect*.

*My Dear Sir:*

I send you such Reports as I can find. If that which you want is deficient, you will find it in the City Documents.

LAKE AVENUE should be worked Northwardly—towards the Poor-Farm. That will make it useful: now, it is not.

As to the WATER PARK; I think that something like the old Metropolitan Police District of New York will be found indispensable. Shrewsbury parting with jurisdiction in consideration of the order and supervision that Worcester; thus enlarged into a territorial district transcending its town lines; should be required to maintain.

Wishing you all success in your arduous duties, I remain most sincerely yours,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN.

Judicious, if somewhat timid, citizens, sometimes urge that there would be difficulty in maintaining good order in a Public Park along the Lake Shore. It is not pretended that acts of violence are frequent, if committed at all, throughout the existing solitudes. The contention would appear to be, that where multitudes assemble the spirit of misrule is dominant; and that a desert must be preferred, so that it is peaceful, to a charming landscape that might necessitate some moderate outlay, or effort, to cultivate the pinks of propriety. But this COMMISSION cherish a more abiding faith in human nature: taking no stock in the clerical disparagement that the old Adam is especially rampant among the people of Worcester. While mischief is occasionally detected, in ELM PARK, it is believed to be, oftener than not, the result of thoughtlessness or downright ignorance. Wanton injury grows more rare, as the community learn that it is their own property which is harmed; and that it is the interest of each to keep up a needful outlook for all. Besides,—as a knowledge of flowers and plants gets more widely diffused, it is evident that depredations diminish in number and extent. It would not be possible, were it at all desirable, to transform a Park, by the Lake, into a garden. The remarkable diversity of soil in



ELM PARK; coupled with its capabilities for ornamental water; enabled the COMMISSION to prosecute the design of a Flower-Garden and Shrubbery, such as they would never even attempt, in any spot less favored by nature. But the sloping shores and verdant lawns by *Lake Quinsigamond*, require no alteration; are far better let alone; and may assuredly be trusted to the safeguard of a population, as owner, which never marred their unadorned beauty although admitted to their enjoyment by mere toleration.

“ When Sir Francis Crossley presented a Park to the working-men of Halifax (Eng.) he said ‘ I attribute the great success, which has enabled me to make this gift to my fellow-townsmen, to this circumstance that, when we first passed through the gates of the big mill yonder, my mother said “ If the Lord prosper us in this place, the poor shall taste of it ! ” How could the poor taste of it more sweetly than in a place of healthful rest and recreation ? Ought not such places to be multiplied, not only by individual munificence, but by public combination ? Surely one of the first anxieties of a government should be the physical, as well as the moral, condition of the people. Surely the commercial man, the employer of labor, must perceive in his consideration of profit and loss, if he have no higher motive, the prime importance of that power, which health alone can give, to see quickly, and strike strongly, and endure continuous work. How much more then, should the Christian, who professes to regard all men as brethren, who has been taught that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it, how much more should he strive to brighten the lives and lighten the burdens of the sons of toil ? ”

Thus speaks the President of the National Rose Society of England, *Canon S. Reynolds Hole*, in an address to Working-men, at the Derby meeting of the Church Congress. Pervading and to some extent corrupting, that address, runs the European theory of a paternal government, which would develop the human being into a more complete animal for the carrying of arms and the endurance of burdens too grievous to be borne. We, who form governments, and of whom they consist ; who are



both ruled and rulers; can discriminate, accepting what is good of that or other doctrine, nor less emphatically rejecting the bad. We may wonder, now and then, if the latter-day Pharisees whether by direct descent or fore-ordination; intermitting their spasmodic deliverances prior to each municipal election in behalf of an enforced asceticism;

Compounding sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to;

and contemplating the modern sons of men eating and drinking beneath the clear skies of June, in a temple not made with hands; would echo the denunciations of their prototypes, declaring the great majority gluttonous and wine-bibbers, and, as such, having a devil! But we will prefer to hope that the example of the great Teacher may not be wholly fruitless; that, even as He wandered through the live-long days and lingering twilights of Judæa; affording no offence to the well-meaning, and taking none because they were civilly disposed, His living disciples may at last coerce their professions into harmony with His practice. Then shall every man mind his own business and find full occupation. Then shall the earth and its fulness indeed ennre to the saints; even Pecksniff becoming as a little child and getting sanctified thereby. And thereafter shall ensue that peace of God which passeth understanding: but of which some faint comprehension illumines his mind, who looks forth upon the world as He fashioned it; and in a devout spirit of gratitude would fain enjoy; nor, enjoying, scruple to derive pleasure from witnessing the innocent delight of others.

All which is respectfully submitted,

(by)

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Massachusetts, January 22d, A. D. 1883.*

# APPENDIX.

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## PUBLIC PARKS.

AN ACT UNDER WHICH CITIES AND TOWNS MAY LAY OUT PUBLIC PARKS.

SECTION 1. Any town in this commonwealth which accepts the provisions of this act in the manner hereinafter prescribed may, at a legal meeting called for that purpose, elect three competent persons who shall constitute a board of park commissioners for such town, and may prescribe their terms of office; and the mayor of any city which in such manner accepts said provisions may, with the approval of the city council, as soon as may be after such acceptance, appoint five competent persons who shall constitute a board of park commissioners for such city, and who shall hold their offices until the expiration of terms of one, two, three, four and five years respectively, from the first Monday in May next following such appointment; and the mayor shall, before the first Monday in May in each year thereafter, with like approval, appoint one such commissioner to continue in office for five years from the expiration of the term of the commissioner then next outgoing. No person shall be such commissioner who is at the same time a selectman or other officer of such town, or a member of the city council, clerk or treasurer of such city; and any such commissioner may be removed by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters of such town, at a legal meeting called for the purpose, or by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the whole of each branch of such city council.

SECT. 2. Any vacancy occurring in such board shall be filled for the residue of the term of the commissioner whose place is to be filled in the same manner in which such commissioner was originally appointed. Such commissioner will serve without compensation.

SECT 3. Such boards of park commissioners shall have power to locate within the limits of their respective towns or cities a public park or parks, and for that purpose from time to time to take in fee by purchase, gift, devise or otherwise, any and all such lands as they may deem desirable therefor, or to take bonds for the conveyance thereof to their respective towns or cities; to lay out and improve any such park or parks; to make rules for the use and government thereof, and for breaches of such rules to affix penalties not exceeding twenty dollars for one offense, to be imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction; to appoint all necessary engineers, surveyors, clerks and other officers, including a police force to act in such parks; to define the powers and

duties of such officers and fix the amount of their compensation ; and generally to do all acts needful for the proper execution of the powers and duties granted to or imposed upon such town or city, or upon such boards by this act ; provided, however, that no land shall be taken, or any other thing involving an expenditure of money be done under this act until an appropriation sufficient to cover the estimated expense thereof shall in a town have been made by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters present, and voting in a legal town meeting called for the purpose, or in a city by a vote of two-thirds of each branch of the city council ; and such expenditures shall in no case exceed the appropriations made therefor, and all contracts made for expenditures beyond the amount of such appropriations shall be void ; provided, further, that in a town no taking of land otherwise than by purchase shall be valid unless such taking is reported to the town, filed, accepted and allowed, as provided by section seventy-one of chapter forty-nine of the Public Statutes in the case of laying out town ways.

SECT. 4. Such board shall, within sixty days after the taking of any land under this act, file and cause to be recorded in the registry of deeds for the county or district in which any land so taken is situated, a description thereof sufficiently accurate for identifying the same.

SECT. 5. Such boards shall respectively estimate and determine all damages sustained by any person by the taking of land, or by other acts of such boards in the execution of the powers vested in them respectively by this act ; but a person aggrieved by any such determination of the board may have his damages assessed by a jury of the superior court, in the same manner as is provided by law with respect to damages sustained by reason of the laying out of ways. If upon trial damages are increased beyond the award, the party in whose favor the award was made shall recover his costs ; otherwise he shall pay costs ; and costs shall be taxed as in civil cases.

SECT. 6. The fee of any land taken or purchased by such boards in any town or city for a park under this act shall vest in the town or city in which said park is laid out ; and such town or city shall be liable to pay all damages assessed or determined, as provided in the preceding section, and all other costs and expenses incurred by its board of park commissioners in the execution of the powers vested in such board by this act. Any town or city shall also be authorized to take and hold in trust or otherwise any devise, grant, gift or bequest that may be made for the purpose of laying out, improving or ornamenting any park or parks therein.

SECT. 7. The boards of park commissioners in their respective towns and cities shall have the same authority to determine the value of, and assess upon real estate the amount of betterments accruing to said real estate by the locating and laying out of a park or parks under this act that is conferred by chapter fifty-one of the Public Statutes upon boards of city or town officers authorized to lay out streets or ways ; and the provisions of the first eight sections of said chapter relating to ways shall apply to such assessments by boards of park commissioners in respect to the location and laying out of parks as

aforesaid ; provided, however, that no assessment shall be laid upon any real estate except such as abuts upon the park from the laying out of which the betterment accrues, or upon a street or way bounded by such park.

SECT. 8. Any town or city in which a public park is laid out under this act may raise, appropriate and expend such sums of money as may be deemed best for the purchase and improvement of such park or parks, subject to the laws of this commonwealth limiting municipal indebtedness.

SECT. 9. For the purpose of defraying the expenses incurred under the provisions of this act, the city council of any city shall have authority to issue from time to time, and to an amount not exceeding the sum actually expended for the purchase or taking of lands for a park or parks, bonds or certificates of debt, to be denominated on the face thereof the "Public Park loan," and to bear interest at such rates and to be payable at such times as said city council may determine. For the redemption of such loan such city council shall establish a sinking fund sufficient, with the accumulating interest, to provide for the payment of such loan at maturity. All amounts received for betterments shall be paid into such sinking fund until such fund shall amount to a sum sufficient with its accumulations to pay at maturity the bonds for the security of which the fund was established.

SECT. 10. All lands taken or held under this act shall be forever kept open and maintained as a public park or parks. No building covering more than six hundred square feet shall be placed or allowed to remain on any such park ; and no street or way, and no steam or horse railroad, shall be laid out over any portion of a park located under this act, except at such places and in such manner as the board of park commissioners shall approve.

SECT. 11. No military encampment, parade, drill, review, or other military evolution or exercise, shall be held or performed on any park laid out as aforesaid, except with the consent of said board, nor shall any military body without such consent enter or move in military order within such park, except in case of riot, insurrection, rebellion or war.

SECT. 12. All such boards of park commissioners shall make reports of their respective doings, including detailed statements of all receipts, expenditures and liabilities for the preceding year ; such reports to be made in towns at the annual town meetings, and at such other times as the town may direct, and in cities to the city council annually in the month of December.

SECT. 13. This act shall not take full effect in any town or city unless accepted by a majority of the legal voters of such town or city present and voting thereon by ballot and using the check list, at a meeting or meetings notice whereof has been duly given at least seven days beforehand. Such ballots shall be "yes" or "no" in answer to the question, "Shall an act passed by the legislature of the commonwealth in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-two, entitled 'An act authorizing towns and cities to lay out public parks within their limits,' be accepted?" In a town such meetings shall be called and

notified in the manner in which meetings for the election of town officers are called and notified ; and in a city meetings to act thereon shall be held at one time in the usual voting places of the city, on such days as shall be designated by the board of aldermen at any regular meeting, and shall be called and notified by the board of aldermen in the manner in which meetings for the election of municipal officers are called and notified. The ballots cast shall be assorted, counted and public declaration made thereof in open town or ward meeting, and the number of ballots respectively cast shall be registered in the town or ward records as the case may be. The clerk of each ward in a city shall, within forty-eight hours of the close of the polls, make return to the board of aldermen of the number of ballots cast in his ward in favor of the acceptance of this act, and of the number cast against its acceptance. The selectmen and town clerk of a town, and the board of aldermen of a city in which such meeting or meetings are held, shall certify, as soon as may be thereafter, to the secretary of the commonwealth, the whole number of ballots cast in favor of the acceptance of this act, and the whole number cast against its acceptance ; and if it shall appear that a majority of the ballots have been cast in favor of acceptance, the said secretary shall immediately issue and publish his certificate declaring this act to have been duly accepted by such town or city.

SECT. 14. No second meeting for the purpose of voting upon the question of accepting this act shall be called within twelve months from the first, unless the first meeting shall have failed through illegality or irregularity in the proceedings.

SECT. 15. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved April 13, 1882.

**BY - LAWS**  
OF THE  
**COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,**  
**OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.**

---

1. No person shall be suffered to affix, in any manner whatsoever, advertisements, handbills, placards, posters, or written or printed notices, to any of the Shade Trees of the City.
2. Dogs are prohibited in Elm Park, unless under the direct control and restraint of their owner; otherwise they will be regarded and treated as outlaws. Owners of dogs will be held personally responsible for any damage done by their animals.

3. All persons are hereby forbidden—

To place any erection or obstruction on the Common or Parks of the City.

To catch, trap or shoot Birds or take Birds' nests.

To injure, damage, destroy or dig up any turf, shrubs, trees or plants, or break up or destroy the surface of the Common or Parks, or light any fire upon them.

To deposit any rubbish, manure, cinders, road sweepings, bricks, timber, building materials, or other substances, upon the Common or Parks of the City, or in any pond or basin of a fountain in said Common or Parks, or in any manner to fill up, defile, or pollute the same.

To place any carriage, cart, or other vehicle on the Common or Parks of the City, or upon the foot-paths over the same.

To fire any gun or other fire-arm (except of the Militia of the Commonwealth), or throw any stick, stone, or other missile.

Or generally, to act in a disorderly manner, or to commit any nuisance, or do any act tending to disfigure or injure the Common or Parks or annoy or hurt any person frequenting them for the purpose of exercise, recreation, or transit.

Under penalty of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) for each offence, to be paid to the person whose testimony shall secure a conviction.

CITY CHARTER—Section 21.

\* \* \* \* And said Board may make all necessary by-laws and regulations in the execution of their trust not inconsistent with this Act and the Laws of the Commonwealth, as they shall deem expedient.

Approved, April 30, A. D. 1866.

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

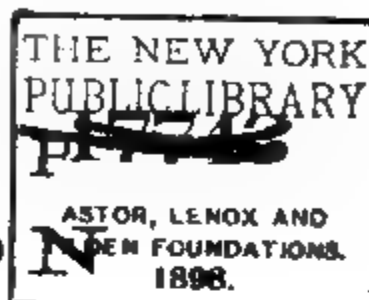
## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1888.



WORCESTER:  
PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,  
311 MAIN STREET.  
1889.





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## COMMISSION

OF

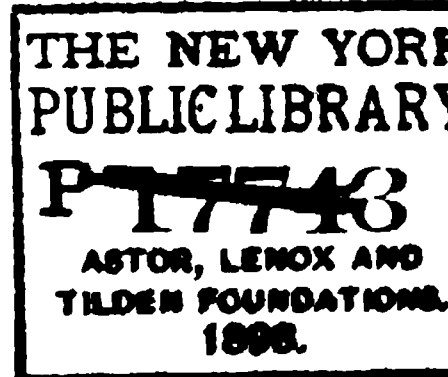
## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1883.



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WORCESTER:  
PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,  
311 MAIN STREET.  
1884.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

## COMMISSION

## OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL:*

A "Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade Trees thereon and on said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same"—during the official year that closed on the Thirtieth day of November, A. D., 1883, is herewith submitted as required by the Twenty-First (21st) section of the municipal Charter:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

*In account with*

CITY OF WORCESTER.

*Cr.:*

Annual Appropriation,	\$6,500 00
-----------------------	------------

*Revenue:*

Grass from Elm Park,	\$50 00	
Labor (lent),	30 60	
	\$80 60	
		\$6,580 60

*Per Contra, Dr.:*

Grading—regular labor for year,	\$2,287 46
Occasional hire of men and teams,	158 75
Plants, shade-trees, and planting,	1,338 15

Loam and manure,	675 06
Seeds (grass, &c.),	97 65
Printing,	51 16
Freight, express, and trucking,	9 15
Blank-books, stationery, and stamps,	30 56
Tools, and hardware,	167 30
Blacksmithery,	14 25
Blue Herons and Water-fowl,	26 62
Grain and keep for same in winter,	16 45
Lumber and carpentry (Tree guards),	662 33
Stone, for flagging pools, &c.,	348 39
Building tool and boat-house (shelter),	525 00
Water department—plumbing (pumps),	18 40
Engineer office—marking for shade-trees,	10 52
Settees—new, and repairs to old,	95 00
Plant and flower stakes,	9 95
Advertising,	16 06
Cement,	1 40
Sewer (rubber) boots,	9 15
	<hr/>
	\$6,568 76

To be sunk,

\$11 84

## COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Massachusetts,

December 24th, A. D., 1883.

To

Henry Griffin, Esq.,

*Auditor :*

In response to your request for an estimate of the sum that should be appropriated for the purposes of this COMMISSION, I have the honor to state that the amount ought not to be less than Seven Thousand Dollars (\$7,000.00).

With each successive year the demand for *Shade-Trees* increases and grows more importunate. The opening of new streets anticipates and exceeds the wisest possible prevision by this COMMISSION. They can but do what they may with inadequate means. On every hand they are reproached for not asking for a larger sum.

Again,—as *Elm Park* becomes more and more a Public Garden, the cost of maintaining it properly is correspondingly increased.

Appreciating the great and pressing demands upon the Public Treasury, from all quarters; demands never to cease until the City elects to stagnate and become worthless as a place of residence; the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS continue moderate in their requests.

I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Very Respectfully and Truly,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman*

Consider the case of the PARK, as stated in that note to the *Auditor*. It is not wholly graded in the judgment of the COMMISSION; whereby will be understood, by those who read as they run, that more work remains to be done at the S. W. corner,—and thoroughly. Slatternly or slipshod grading and trenching do not pass muster with men who would approve themselves honest servants of the city. But even when superficial labor is completed,—if so that may be termed which fixes the soil and forms the turf; the season of bud and bloom supervenes, with its own peculiar, oft-times overwhelming toil. Weeds must be kept down; not the easiest task, when soaking showers and torrid suns combine to force vegetation of every kind into premature and rank development. The grass must be cut or clipped; for only in the early stages of improvement is it permissible to make hay,—deriving some small revenue therefrom. Where there are Islets,—they must be cared for, so far as to look neat, at least; and when, as in the case of ELM PARK, they are purposely studded to profusion with flowering and fragrant shrubs, manuring and pruning become absolutely necessary—yet not to be undertaken as botch work. Never, within the past four years, have the COMMISSION been able to purchase as much manure as they imperatively required. The City, through its Highway Department, doubtless finds its advantage in peddling the ordure from its stables. Raw dung would be unsuitable for Park purposes, save at rare times and for hap-hazard needs. But an abundance to compost, so as to have it in mass and quality when wanted, should be supplied by the City, either by money-appropriation or in kind; if it would have its Public Grounds kept in a condition that might inspire contentment, if not pride, when displayed to the official, or espied by the casual stranger within our gates. For possibly our inns will not always repel Conventions that represent the brains and not the stomachs of Massachusetts!

The Public Garden of Boston is a theme for admiring compliment with those who can see a good thing—away from home! even if they cannot properly judge it or compute its cost. But our ELM PARK is three (3) acres larger, and, all told, has never had expended for its development as much as was lavished upon

the Boston Garden in single years. Yet it is the simple truth to state that there is a greater diversity and wealth of flowering and rare shrubs, as well as of deciduous and coniferous trees, in ELM PARK, than could be discovered by the most diligent search in the pet pleasure-resort of the metropolis. As heretofore suggested,—two-thirds of the charm attributed to the Boston Public Garden is reflected from the massive piles of striking architecture that encompass it; by which the gaze is fascinated and whereto it constantly recurs after the diverted attention of the moment. The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, in Worcester, neither challenge nor invite comparison of their work with any in other cities: but being fully cognizant of actual results as accomplished here and elsewhere, they shrink from no competent criticism or scrutiny. Again,—elsewhere, they have paid service, if only for superintendence. Here,—the COMMISSION not only serve for the honor and satisfaction of it, finding their own team; but the *Chairman* is crowded out from the garret and cellar of his house by the bulbs and tender plants belonging to the city, because nowhere else is there a place wherein to protect them from the severity of winter. Not for them is the greenhouse or cold-house, to multiply or preserve! Split slabs instead of hammered blocks, the wooden bridge rather than the monumental Arch; one man with his wheelbarrow where, in any other place, you would block the way by a hundred with their horses and carts! If the COMMISSION appear to move slow it is because now, as in the old song, it is

“Money that makes the mare to go.”

But yet, whatever has been achieved in ELM PARK has been done within Nine (9) years, as means and opportunity allowed. And so far as the work accomplished is not submerged, it is conspicuous to every one who has taken note of the gradual steps in landscape improvement.

Since their last Report was submitted, the COMMISSION have caused two new Islets to be constructed,—one by the deposition the other by the retention of earth; have had a new channel excavated along the westerly shore of the Oval Pool; have had, or

will have had, by the time the ice breaks up, the entire retaining wall or embankment of that Pool reconstructed, and finished with a coping of large, split stone from the civic quarries on Millstone Hill. Almost the entire shore line will be completed, when the ground is free from frost; thereby affording a safe, level, and agreeable promenade for those who enjoy proximity to sparkling water, cheerful companionship, the sight and cheer of passing boats, and it is to be hoped, the resonance and echo of instrumental music "making a joyful noise unto the Lord" upon the First day of the week.

They have in process of thrifty development, a very great variety of ornamental plants and shrubs which will serve, as they enlarge, to decorate the PARK; and they possess even now suitable for the roadside, a superior lot of Shade-Trees that are designed for the suburban districts, if only through the local Granges or otherwise the task of planting may be assumed upon the assurance that the trees themselves, having been procured for little or nothing, as saplings, are paid for once and forever. Quite a number of the outlying School-Districts have their roadsides well shaded at present, thanks to the energy and self-sacrifice of men who found their remuneration in those very virtues. But the COMMISSION have noted gaps that ought to be closed up, in various directions; and they will be glad to supply the trees, upon the assurance that they will be properly planted along highways that might be neglected otherwise; and that they shall not be browsed down thereafter without complaint or effort at redress.

As to the actual condition of the *Shade-Trees* of the City, the COMMISSION would assert nothing with confidence. They have continued planting, as was alike their preference and duty; yet they cannot but dread the revelations of the coming summer. They are aware of what "Science" assumes—that taking the years in their sequence, the amount of rainfall from one to another, scarcely varies. Yet they have greater faith in facts, whether the theory conflicts with them or not. They know, from positive experience, that the little patches of earth intrusted to their care were drier throughout the last three years than ever

before. They can understand that with digging for Gas and Water Mains; and much more by the construction of Sewers, ever porous and always draining; the highways may get parched so that scarce even the Ash or Elm should maintain a miserable vitality. Besides, brick and stone pavements, or that queer macadam,—if a mulch after a fashion,—can hardly be accounted manure or moisture. But ELM PARK re-inforces the argument. The Pools keep up their level until the in-gathering of hay. Thereafter, at once as it were, throughout the whole alluvium or diluvium, for the spade can justify either term, the water subsides in a night, sinking into the veins that percolate the shifting subsoil or quicksand underlying all that part of Worcester which stretches from Highland Street to Coes's Reservoir and occupies the entire valley between Fruit and Piedmont Streets to the East and Newton Hill on the West. When heavy showers have saturated the surrounding country, the water in those Pools again rises, evidently supplied from subterranean fountains that respond to the bounteous clouds with the regularity of tides. But, throughout the three years last past, the average flood was sensibly diminished. Cultivation might absorb a part; yet that and evaporation united would fail to respond for even a fraction of the old-fashioned lavish down-pour from that capacious watershed.

Were the writer over-credulous,—more inclined to believe all that he reads,—he might attribute somewhat of the increasing dryness, or at least its manifest effects, to a vastly augmented plant and shrub growth. What that has been found to do elsewhere, as stated in the foot-note,\* was long since observed by the Chairman of the Commission. In cleaning the well, upon

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\* THE THIRSTY EUCALYPTUS.—Where there is surplus moisture to dispose of, as, for example, a cesspool to keep dry, a large eucalyptus will accomplish not a little, and a group of them will dispose of a vast amount of house sewerage. But if you have water which you do not wish to exhaust, as in a good well, it would be wise to put the eucalyptus very far away. Daniel Sweet of Bay Island farm, Alameda county, recently found a curious root formation of the eucalyptus in the bottom of his well, about sixteen feet below the surface. The trees to which the roots belonged stand fifty feet from the well. Two shoots pierced through the brick wall of the well, and, sending off millions of fibres, formed a dense mat that completely covered the bottom of the well. Most of these fibres are no larger than threads, and are



the *Common* some years since, a precisely similar mat to that ascribed to the eucalyptus was found, whose origin was neither more aristocratic nor far-fetched than our American Elm. Unquestionably vegetation will, nay must absorb moisture: but that well, within the knowledge of the COMMISSION, has ever maintained the same steady level and volume.

The writer has sometimes favored a theory that the continual as it were incessant, jar over City *streets*, would of itself prove fatal to the life of Shade-Trees. The old Town-way, lined by Horse-Chestnut or over-arched by Sycamores, carpeted for half its width on either side with the greenest turf, was seldom disturbed save by the periodical trip of the stage-coach or the more precipitate passage of the village Doctor. The tremendous weight of loaded wire was not imposed upon that tract of virgin soil, to which perhaps it might have been as appropriate as its palpable and evident avoidance of the iron tracks,—alike saving of friction and wear, yet possibly not its exclusive spoil. Nor was there a massive pavement for a mortar, whereon the tramp and concussion of myriad feet,—as a gigantic pestle, could disintegrate and comminute the solid earth beneath. Solid under ordinary conditions and in the usual climatic vicissitudes, but pulverized by chronic drought, without the least moisture for months to make its particles cohere. But it is a question of water,—and the writer's theory may not hold it.

The COMMISSION would fain be discharged upon this occasion, from a renewed load of obligation. At all times they have been the recipients, from green-house or garden, from florist or amateur, of superfluous but valuable plants which, having outgrown the limited premises of their owners might well gain a new and ampler home within a public pleasure-ground. Their efforts to recover for cultivation the hardy perennial plants and shrubs,

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so woven and intertwined as to form a mat as impenetrable and strong as though regularly woven in a loom. The mat when first taken out of the well was water-soaked and covered with mud, and nearly all a man could lift, but when dry it was nearly as soft to touch as wool, and weighed only a few ounces. This is a good illustration of how the eucalyptus absorbs moisture, its roots going so far as to find water, pushing themselves through a brick wall, and then developing enormously after the water is reached. Mr. Sweet thinks one of the causes of the drying up of wells is the insatiable thirst of these vegetable monsters.—*Pacific Rural Press*.

that formerly lent such attraction to the old-time gardens of Worcester, have been materially aided by the generosity of those whose shrewd sense and fine taste had led them to hold fast what has approved itself, ever and in all seasons, good. The only return possible for the COMMISSION, has been an occasional load of peat which, in the way and of extreme plenty, has enabled them now and then, to make an acceptable if slight acknowledgment of floral gifts and courtesies.

During the last year the COMMISSION have been presented by *Mr.* Charles H. Davis with an elegant representation, in Japanese bronze, of what they assume to be *Ardea Herodias*, the Great Blue Heron ; although not positive that Asia, or the Islands contiguous, are comprised within its habitat. Magnified as is this work of art, the living bird of the same genus betrayed no jealousy, as he did subsequently when beholding the connubial happiness of the pair introduced from Philadelphia by *Mr.* E. S. Knowles. Perhaps he did not recognize the kinship of species ; a matter of less wonder since men and women have been overheard at a distance of but ten feet, marvelling if "the creature were alive" ! The pecuniary value of that gift is of least importance in the estimation of the COMMISSION, considerable though it must have been. But they prefer to recognize in it a new and material evidence of the interest which *Mr.* Davis has always shown in their work ; another proof of his zeal for the adornment of his native City ; additional testimony that some tastes are hereditary, and that his liberality and its direction descend naturally enough from one who, long years ago, made proffer to Worcester of a large tract of land which, it is to be greatly regretted, is not now in municipal possession and popular enjoyment.

The COMMISSION improve this, their first opportunity to express their sense of the loss sustained by themselves in the departure from the City of its late Water Commissioner, *Mr.* Frank E. Hall. Whatsoever assistance he could give them, during many years of official intercourse, was rendered in no halting, hesitating, half-hearted manner. His co-operation was ever most cordial, dictated by a generous nature and confirmed by a clear perception, too seldom evinced, that such thorough accord tends most

directly to promote the public welfare. Perhaps Worcester can afford to dispense with the expert service of men who, like *Mr. Hall*, have grown up in her employment; and surrender them to the better appreciation of private corporations in our smaller towns! A few dollars are doubtless saved for the immediate present. And yet

“The scripture saith, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.’”

The COMMISSION are observing closely the character of that growing Winter’s dump upon the *Common*. As a convenience for the Highway Department, it will be suffered so long as it is not actually injurious. But the Street Railway Co. has no claims upon their official consideration. And when such messes are loaded up for deposit upon the Public Grounds, as was noticed by the *Chairman* on the evening of the 23rd January, current, near Harrington Corner, it may become necessary to borrow the Salt and Sand Metres used in Boston, by whose disclosures prohibition was rendered imperative upon the Common of the metropolis.

The Ordinances of the City under the broad caption of “Police,” define the following among other duties of the City Marshal:

“It shall be his duty to enforce and carry into effect all laws and City Ordinances, and to be vigilant to detect and punish any breach thereof.”

No portion of his duties, no corresponding obligation of his subordinates, is anywhere or at any time transferred to the strong shoulders of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. Yet the Statutes of Massachusetts and the Ordinances of Worcester take Shade-Trees under their care, denounce penalties for any careless or wanton damage to them, and assume that any injury will be punished as promptly as the sale of a glass of beer by some poor woman who uses illegal methods of eking out a wretched livelihood. The *Chairman* of the COMMISSION has complained; although ordinary “vigilance to detect,” by those who are sworn

and paid to do it, should have anticipated or precluded the necessity for such action on his part. The late *Judge* Williams told the *Chairman* as he was detailing instances of neglect, if not of "hush thee my baby! In the tree top!", to complain thereafter directly to him. Quite recently trees in Elm street, by the Lincoln House; and on Main street before the Central Exchange, and Flagg Block; are gnawed daily. No patrolman sees it, although every other person does: perhaps none care to "detect and punish" the offender. But every man of them concurs in the policy of perpetually increasing the Force!

A year or two since, of a Sunday, the *Chairman* shew a patrolman, just now promoted, where a horse was in the very act of gnawing and destroying one of the largest Elms on Main street. The officer knew who was the owner, saying that he was at his devotions on Walnut street and must shortly be out in the world. Would he take the team to the Police-Office? His beat would not expire for a little while longer. Would he tell his relief to notify the owner, when he came, of his liability, and complain at headquarters when he got there? Yes! but he never did. The *Chairman* went in person to the Police Office, as soon as he could walk thither, and narrated all the circumstances. That was all that came of it. The case was one of lawlessness, but it held neither beer nor rum!

Well,—on this 24th day of January, A. D., 1884, the *Chairman* has himself accomplished a little bit of detective work that he asked a patrolman to undertake weeks since. It was done simply enough: just happening around at the right time.

What this COMMISSION would like to know, is,—if the Ordinances and Laws protecting Shade-Trees are meant to be regarded; if they are comprised among those "Laws and City Ordinances" that the Marshal is sworn to "enforce and carry into effect;" and if not, why not?

Popular attention has been invited, in former Reports of this COMMISSION, to corporate aggression and usurpation. Trees have been mutilated, or cut down, not only without leave, but seemingly without the slightest idea on the part of the offender that

any could be requisite but his own instance and volition. Two or three Telegraph Corporations know more about the true inwardness of the Common and Statute Law than they did, in their callow youth ; and if the knowledge came to them without extreme cost, they may thank the forbearance of the writer. For although vigilant like his colleagues, to guard the City from detriment, within their exclusive province ; he has not, more than they, any fondness for a wanton exercise of authority. If, after long sufferance and slowness to anger, the average man of Worcester had come to think that the gentle dews of Heaven could only be distilled over his garden or farm through a warp and woof of wires ; in whose location he was not consulted and for whose location he was never compensated ; he has mainly to thank a political education whereby the individual is subordinated to the corporation ; the man made in the image of God to the bastard *simulacrum* fostered by a half-century of statutory privilege and municipal concession.

“ The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying Give ! Give ! ”

The Great and General Court can grant much ; being at times profuse in that species of *largesse* that costs him so little who rejoiceth that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

But, for the safeguard of the individual, the unit of a free State ; for the better muniment of the public liberty,—the sum and substance of private right and immunity from all forms of oppression ; all pervading and instinct with the breath of Revolutionary life, exists in actual and hearty force, the Massachusetts Bill of Rights, qualifying, explaining, defining, and restricting. Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther !

Does the latter-day abject,—ready, or even solicitous to pay the duty on Tea ! inquire with bated breath—*Quis custodiet custodes ?* Who shall oversee the watchmen ? The Bill of Rights—never read in our schools ! and therefore scarcely known out of them ; provides for the permanent establishment of a tribunal as

“ Free, impartial, and independent as the lot of humanity will admit.”

And therefore, although the General Court too often “slops over ;” abnegating its sovereignty with but hasty audience or de-

liberation; delegating the tremendous privilege of Eminent Domain to the more importunate and least meritorious; but invariably to those who would buy in open market, at a fair price, if they were not authorized to extort; it has never yet cared, or dared, to enact that a

“Part of the property of any individual can, with justice, be taken from him, or applied to public uses, without his own consent, or that of the representative body of the people.”

Or that

“Whenever the public exigencies require that the property of any individual should be appropriated to public uses he shall (not) receive a reasonable compensation therefrom.”

With how much nicer precision, then, would a concession of such almost absolute power be guarded, when sought to be exercised by a body of individuals associated for private gain! What exact precaution to ensure that every step shall be carefully indicated in advance! each successive location, whether of rail or wire, designated and allowed by the proper and competent authority; and all of those locations or positions subject to the fundamental rights of property so jealously protected by the Bill of Rights!

The same Charter that creates a CITY COUNCIL, with its *Board of Aldermen*, provides in its very next section, for the establishment of a COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. The same Charter that defines the jurisdiction of either or both branches of that City Council over the highways and streets, is particular and explicit in conferring upon such COMMISSION the

“sole care, superintendence and management of the Public Grounds belonging to said City of Worcester;”

phraseology which, to an ordinary master of the English language, might appear sufficiently comprehensive and definite.

Any trespass upon their authority in derogation of Common Right; whether emanating from ignorance or superciliousness; could not be winked out of their sight, nor neglected when in plain view of the COMMISSION. Distorted and unseemly poles, illegally set within the notorious and well-defined limits of the

*Common*, were felled in pursuance of orders duly issued by the Chairman. Some correspondence that preceded and followed this action is given, in this connection, and in proper sequence, for a more thorough explanation of the whole matter; so interesting, as affecting, in a measure, the most vital interests of the people:

[COPY.]

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass., December 18, 1888.

FRANK P. GOULDING, Esq.,

*City Solicitor:*

MY DEAR SIR:—

Will you kindly inform me if, by their Acts of Incorporation, or by the General Statutes, Telephone Companies are authorized to enter upon the Public Grounds of this City, and to erect and maintain their business poles thereon, without leave or license from this COMMISSION?

The matter appears plain enough to me—but there are those who will need to be convinced by your official opinion.

Believe me, most sincerely, your friend,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

[COPY.]

WORCESTER, MASS., Dec. 14, 1888.

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN, Esq.,

*Chairman, Comm'n of Public Grounds, &c.*

MY DEAR SIR:—

In your letter of 13th inst., you ask me (whether) by their Acts of Incorporation, or by the General Laws, Telephone Companies are authorized to enter upon the Public Grounds of this City;—and to erect and maintain their business poles thereon, without leave or license of your Commission.

In answer, I would say that I am aware of no law which gives to Telephone Companies any such right; and I am of opinion that they have no such authority, and that such poles, not being in a highway, but on the Public Grounds of the City;—set and maintained without your permission,—are there without any right whatever.

Yours Truly,

FRANK P. GOULDING,

*City Solicitor.*

As connected with *res gestæ*, and illustrative of the inch and ell theory; the following note deserves insertion, here:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GAZETTE:—

I desire to state to the public my connection with the setting of the Telephone poles on the Common, which were cut down yesterday, by order of Commissioner Lincoln. Mr. Wilson, of the Telephone Co., applied to me, as Chairman of the Committee on Highways, for leave to set poles so as to concentrate a large mass of wires with a cable. *Alderman* Coes, of the Committee, *Alderman* Tatman, of the Committee on Lighting Streets, and Engineer Brophy, of the Fire Department, were consulted, and we all agreed that the change was a desirable one.

Accordingly, I gave Mr. Wilson permission, informally, to set three poles, but I understood they were to be set close to the inside edge of the sidewalk between Front and Park Streets. The location of the poles, where they were afterward set, was never contemplated by us, and was entirely without the knowledge of the Committee.

CALEB COLVIN,

*Chairman, Committee on Highways.*

And now came a direct application to the City Council, from the Telephone Company, for leave to set poles within the limits of the *Common*. This was referred, as a matter of course, to the Highway Committee, with power to act: although it had become evident to the people, at least, that this Commission claimed sole jurisdiction in the premises. Not desiring any controversy that could be avoided, the *Chairman* addressed a note to *Alderman* Colvin, as follows:

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 20, 1883.

*Alderman,*

CALEB COLVIN, *Chairman.*

MY DEAR SIR:—

Will you provide for the removal, from the Common, of the pole lately set up illegally, by the N. W. corner of the Old South Meeting-house; or must I seek for redress, and remedy, in the only way that has hitherto approved itself effectual?

I spared it, as it is too good a stick to be spoiled, unnecessarily.

Very Respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*



There are other Poles, with their armament of wires, that were set up and are now maintained within the limits of the *Common*; whose location was never sanctioned by this COMMISSION. Assertion was profuse that the Board of Aldermen had designated the positions actually occupied; and courtesy to that Honorable Body seemed to require that this COMMISSION should await its wiser and more considerate action. There would appear, at this time of writing, to have been some fearful lying, in the premises. The Aldermen are understood to disclaim, with entire unanimity, any responsibility for the location of those poles of an Electric Light Company. When due regard for comity ceases, and duty to the public demands action; it will then devolve upon this COMMISSION to determine whether it may be better to tolerate invasion; exacting an annual revenue per pole, or for length of wire; or to eradicate and efface. Possibly the reflection of light upon the COMMON, without charge, may be deemed to afford a partial compensation for that "location" which expects a remuneration, from the municipality, for the illumination of Front Street!

For the invasion of popular sovereignty is flagrant and offensive. In the judgment of this COMMISSION, resting upon that buttress of the Common Law; which, founded on the Rock of Ages, has ever been a sure reliance to him who had no other place whereon to put his foot; no authority entrusted to, or lavished upon any municipal body can delegate power in derogation of Common Right. Whether that position be valid, or not, it cannot be disputed by the most refined casuist that, in their latest codification of the statutes, the "Plain People" have erected a barrier not to be surmounted save by their own idiocy and ignoble surrender:

"No highway, townway, street, turnpike, canal, railroad, or street railway, shall be laid out or constructed over a Common or Park dedicated to the use of the public, or appropriated to such use without interruption for the period of twenty years; nor shall any part of such Common or Park be taken for (widening or altering) a highway, townway or street, unless with the consent of the inhabitants of the City or Town, after public notice, given in the manner provided in cases of the location and alteration of highways, setting forth the extent

and limits of the portion thereof proposed to be taken. Such consent shall be expressed by vote of the inhabitants, if ten or more voters file a request in writing to that effect with the Selectmen, or the Mayor and Aldermen, within thirty days after the publication of the notice; in the absence of such request, consent shall be presumed."—[*Public Statutes of Mass'tts*, 1882. Chap. 54, Sec. 18-14.]

And as the greater includes the less; the mention of so many by name, presupposing that they were every method of infringement, or invasion of Common Right, known A. D., 1876, when that Act was passed; by parity of reasoning the law for the older rail may be considered law for the more modern wire. But, note! those who still enjoy,—as well as those who would grasp it! that the exclusive and unmolested possession and use of their COMMONS and PARKS can only be bartered, for the usual mess of pottage, by the people themselves, in Ward or Town meeting lawfully assembled!

The following correspondence, occurring since the above was written, is inserted here, although it passed within the current official year. It relates to the topic immediately under consideration, however; and is of present interest as defining the fixed position of the COMMISSION upon the entire subject-matter:

[COPY.]

“ WORCESTER DIVISION,

NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY.

Worcester, Jan. 14, 1884.

E. W. LINCOLN, Esq.,

*Chairman, Commission on Parks and Shade Trees*

*of the City of Worcester.*

DEAR SIR:—

In behalf of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Co., I would respectfully request permission to set two poles on the Common, near the Old South Church, on the East line of Main St. sidewalk, to carry cables for Telephonic purposes; also, to accommodate the Fire Alarm wires.

These poles will be tall enough to carry cables over the trees so as not to interfere with them whatever. Your early attention to this will greatly oblige,

Yours, Very Respectfully,

W. F. BLACK,

*Super'nt."*

## COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

WORCESTER, MASS., January 16, 1884.

W. F. BLACK, Esq.,

*Supt. N. E. Telephone & Telegraph Co.*

SIR;

The Commission of Public Grounds have considered your application for "permission to set two poles on the Common near the Old South Church on the East line of Main St. sidewalk to carry cables for Telephonic purposes, also to accommodate the Fire Alarm wires;" and would answer that, in their judgment, they are forbidden by the spirit, if not the letter, of the law, from according such leave.

The Statutes are explicit in their restriction of the power of allowing encroachment, of certain kinds upon Commons or Parks, to the inhabitants of Cities assembled in Ward meetings, duly warned, whereat consent or denial shall be formally expressed by ballot. The Telephone is not specifically designated, as are highways, street-railways, &c. But, it must be borne in mind that the Telephone is a recent discovery,—the actual priority of invention being even now a subject of litigation; and that your own patent is almost precisely coeval with the date of enactment of that Statute whereby it was designed to protect the integrity of Public Grounds.

The Commission cannot forget that just previous to the passage of what may well be termed the Disabling Act, the People of Worcester had made strenuous efforts and endured some sacrifices for the purpose of reclaiming their Common. Those efforts and sacrifices must have been familiar to the members of the General Court who passed the Statute of A. D. 1876. It is not doubted, by this Commission, that it was the deliberate intention of the Legislature to forbid and prevent any concession of right, or privilege, within "Commons or Parks dedicated to the use of the Public," save such as should be sanctioned by the People themselves, in their collective sovereignty.

The Commission do not conceive that you are subjected to inconvenience by their decision, adverse to your request, since the highways are open to you, by law, upon your compliance with legal requirements. If, as you assert, you charitably propose to accommodate the Fire Alarm wires, the Commission do not doubt that a suitable location, along such highways will be designated by the Honorable Mayor and Aldermen.

But, for themselves,—this Commission recognize but one duty: that of inflexible fidelity to the trust committed to them.

I remain, Very Respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

In the precipitate erection of Poles, by an electric construction company, somewhat earlier in the season, throughout Main Street,

statements were made to the Chairman of this Commission which led to the subjoined correspondence:—

[*Copy.*]

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Mass'ts, 1 P. M., November 8, A. D. 1883.

*My Dear Sir,*

As it has become evident that an attempt has been made to impose upon this Commission;—in order to gain for a private interest and behoof a concession which the Commission would not unreasonably withhold from a stated demand by the City, for public uses; this is to give notice that no wires, electric or otherwise, will be suffered to be affixed to the Shade-Trees of the City, whether by direct attachment; through eye-bolts; or, in any manner whatsoever.

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

The original was personally left by the Chairman, at the office of Charles B. Whiting, Electric Manager; and copies handed to William Brophy, Electrician for the City; as well as to the City Marshal,—with the following postscript to the latter:

“The Marshal is requested to direct the officers to see that the above is complied with.  
E. W. L.”

[*Copy.*]

Nov. 9, '83.

“Mr. LINCOLN,

*Dear Sir,*

In reply to your communication of the 8th inst., I will say that it is not the intention of parties interested in the Electric Light Co. to “affix to the Shade-Trees of the City, by direct attachment through eye-bolts” any wires, or to injure the trees in any manner.

It will be necessary to pass wires between the limbs of trees occasionally, which I presume you will not object to as the wires which are insulated will then pass through rubber piping.

Very Respectfully,

CHAS. B. WHITING.

How far that explicit notice, and the unconditional acceptance of its terms, have been observed in fact may be judged by any one who will use his eyes as he passes along the North front of the *Common*.

Yet, where it might help that company,—at the same time accomplishing work needed by the City, this Commission has not

hesitated to allow trees to be pruned of superfluous wood, under the competent supervision of *Mr. J. G. Kelley*, the expenses being defrayed by the Electric Light Corporation.

The Commission will not protract this Report by enlarging upon their cherished design for a Broad Avenue to encompass the City. So much of it has already been built; so great and increasing is the use of it so far as completed; so valuable has it become as a practical thoroughfare and also an agreeable and inviting way of introducing strangers to Worcester; that further argument in its behalf seems almost supererogatory. Along Park Avenue a settlement of homes is rapidly advancing; population increases; and public opinion has crystallized in firm support of the whole far-sighted measure. What is now lacking, chiefly,—are the cross-sections from Southbridge Street to Quinsigamond; and from West Boylston Street to Burncoat; affording what does not now exist, a facile and safe mode of intercommunication for those growing portions of the City.

As for the completion—*Northwardly*,—of Lake Avenue,—legally *decreed* as it has been for years, it might seem that the need of work for some of our unemployed townsmen who do not wish to beg nor loaf, would suggest also an opportunity. That Avenue will be comparatively idle and useless until constructed to its Northern outlet into Lincoln Street. When so completed it will not only furnish a most convenient way of access and egress for the people, to and from the Lake, but present an admirable mark of delimitation between the land reserved for especial use by the Hospital and that which should be secured by Worcester for a *Common* or *Park*.

The *Public Grounds* of Worcester, A. D., 1883, had their full representation of those “miserable curs” that render even Governors morose and disturb his present Excellency’s serenity of temper. The plague of Dogs, upon the *Common*, is chronic, omnipresent. Sooner or later, a *battue* will be inevitable in the interest of common decency. As a “twin relic,” it were better abated there where “the offence is rank,” than at the distance of thousands of miles whither the “force of example can no farther

go." In *Elm Park*, they are an unmitigated nuisance. They scurry through the flower beds; they plunge into the shallow Pools, roiling the water, chasing the Water-Fowl, [almost killing the oldest heron last Summer], and when they emerge, they spoil all the holiday clothes in the neighborhood as they shake the drops from their flea-bitten, mangy coats. The seasons impose no check upon those exuberant, gushing natures; the canine range being as accurate and far-reaching in mid-winter as when Sirius rageth. If those sharp-shooters once "get on" a target,—be it Rose, Azalea, or Rhododendron,—it matters not how rare or priceless! their continual, if intermittent, fire by file is surely lethal. The patience of the Commission, like a stone, is worn out by constant dripping. The *mitraille* will be indispensable if floriage and fragrance are to be perpetuated in *Elm Park*. Their apologists say, "Good doggie! he never had a friend like you!" But what man or woman of them all is willing to control them properly or to tend their illicit vent when at loose in the *Public Grounds*? The string by which each fond mistress affects to guide the reckless steps of her adored tip-tilted skye becomes far more effectual to destroy some precious plant than the little beast would tangle in a worse snarl than it utters. And, at best, it only fetters errant feet: peccant humors are not of such easy restraint. As Shakespeare might have said—

The evil that dogs do smells after them.

The scent is ne'er interred with their bones.

A. D. 1854, in a Valedictory Address to the Board of Aldermen, the late JOHN S. C. KNOWLTON thus referred to the acquisition, by the City, of what is now known as ELM PARK, which had been accomplished during his mayoralty:

"During the year, and under your direction, a large tract of land has been purchased for an additional Public Common. In purchasing this, you have consulted the health, the comfort, and the convenience of a large body of our citizens. In busy communities, it is natural for people to congregate upon territories of small extent. It is wise, therefore, to induce them to expand their settlements over a greater extent of land. It not only conduces to the public health and comfort, but it enhances the value of property in their localities and thus promotes the general welfare."

At that time, the population of the City was 21,237; and its valuation \$17,077,800. A generation has passed away, and now A. D. 1884, Worcester is reasonably credited with 70,000 inhabitants; the valuation, in round numbers, being \$48,570,000. It will be noticed that souls have increased in greater proportion than dollars: although could corporations sole be constrained to disclose their secrets, as freely and fully as corporations aggregate, the assessors might perhaps acquire that "transparent eyeball" of the transcendentalist, whereby reversion getteth to itself great gains, and introversion findeth fresh fields and pastures new. Yet that official proposition of *Mayor Knowlton*, one of the most discreet, yet when occasion needed, audacious servants whereof this City has been privileged to boast; that the diffusion of settlement should be a prime object with a wise municipality, is sustained to a remarkable degree by that latest civic return. If it was desirable, in the interest of the whole body politic, to disperse or scatter wide a population of twenty-one thousand; how much more vociferous and imperative should be the clamor and necessity for diffusion and space when seventy thousand must find suitable and adequate provision! The ancient charm of Worcester, as of so many other New England villages, was to be discerned in the happy combination of pleasant homesteads, ample roadways, and over-arching Elms or massive Maples. The City succeeds, or rather supplants, the village; but of what nature is the substitute? Its individual citizen encroaches upon an immemorial Main street; stealing from the community, that meanest of all thefts whereof the civilized man, can be guilty; he foregoes to temptation or surrenders to necessity that front-yard wherein the early settler planted and enjoyed his lilac-bush or syringa; he builds to the skies, climbing by flats and flattening as he ascends, neither reserving as owner, nor having assignment of space as tenant, to hang out a weekly wash; he enlargeth his school-house by robbing his children of their playground, not scrupling to instruct the young in edifices whose architecture! the godless heathen would reject for their graven images; he procureth a teacher who catechiseth his twelve-year old girl upon the music of Athens in the age of Pericles! he ad-

vocateth protection to home industry—meaning thereby his own home; and at last having fructified an uneasy but money-getting existence, he passes a sleek hand over a smooth paunch, saying to himself:

“What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?”

“And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

“And I will say to my soul, soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!

“But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”

“*Facilis descensus Averni!*” but this COMMISSION prefer the other road, if the gate is strait and the way narrow. In the current election between God and mammon their choice has never wavered. Of that ultimate, already now imminent, necessity, a necessity alike for municipal development as for popular enjoyment; this COMMISSION were never forgetful. In their very first Report, as now constituted, A. D. 1870, they write, as follows:

“The farm takes precedence of the shop; and yet, while no sum can be too great to lavieh upon the intricate network of alleys, courts and streets which separate the centre and heart of the Municipality into infinitesimal subdivisions, every dollar is grudged that is required to promote the convenience of those without whose toil man could not live. The farm and its produce are indispensable; the middleman and his store are not absolute necessities. Whatever, then, has a tendency to open up the surrounding country; to develop its natural charms; and to encourage settlement and cultivation where now the bramble and the woodchuck hold undisputed possession; substituting smooth lawns, neat gardens, and improved stock; inducing the street loafer to become the independent yeoman, and attracting, by the simple aspect of rural loveliness the permanent sojourn of the chance wayfarer; surely here, and in all this, is an object worth striving for, worth far more, in fact, than even current extravagance could possibly make it cost in realization.”

Again, in their Report, A. D. 1873, the veriest clod-head reaping where he had not sown, in a field theretofore suffered to lie fallow and in which thistles and sheaves were in inverse ratio to



their actual worth; the wisdom of inducing settlement whither there had been only cow-pastures; of planting men and women in place of the chipmunk and coney; of clothing the hill-sides with human dwellings instead of abandoning them to the birch, kalmia, or even huckleberry; was presented in a light that could have been inspired only by the most earnest conviction, and to which the Commission can hope to add nothing by mere repetition.

Shade will be requisite and rest: the trees not less than the seats beneath them, will require room. But, although, in detail, every cavil might be answered, it is only necessary in a case so explicit, to repeat that the plan of this Commission, be that of others what it may, contemplates an AVENUE which shall open up, for culture and domicile, a large and ever-increasing territory. Which shall make land accessible to the artisan or day laborer, so that by reasonable thrift he may acquire a homestead at a tolerable price. And yet which shall rank among the finest of our thoroughfares, to be sought out, occupied, and improved by the tasteful from abroad, who have eyes to see and the means to gratify their inclination. Is it not but too painfully clear that our population is closely crowded? Huddled together in a narrow valley, between two abrupt ridges? Will it be denied that all concerned, the community and the individual, parents and children, the public health and private comfort, would be vastly benefited by an immediate and wider dispersion? And, if such gregariousness is of evil tendency, does not that municipality act wisely taking measures, at one and the same time, to augment the sum of individual happiness and promote the general welfare?

Yet as the Commission behold the rapid expansion of the City; as they see the occupation on every side of tracts of land, heretofore depastured or left to lie waste; as they note the natural, scarce-repressed impatience of a tired, thronging multitude, alike too numerous and too poor to worship God in cushioned seats, albeit the roof and the floor pay nothing to Cæsar; but who would yet reluct at an arrest for trespass on the First day of the week, because they followed the example of their Saviour by betaking themselves to the open fields—not their own—possibly; they feel as though their duty would be but partially discharged were they not, in and out of season, to

impress upon their fellow-citizens,—well blessed with superfluous substance, and upon the City Council, that alone can take the initiative, the impolicy, almost danger, of postponing every thought for the acquisition of Public Grounds for the Worcester of the future. That Worcester will be powerless to procure them; they will have been taken up, long since, for the various purposes of our diversified industries. But it is not an altogether pleasant reflection that our children and grandchildren, as they exhume the talent and napkin from the ground wherein we buried it, shall curse our memory as of a selfish, improvident generation; a people that looked only to its own immediate, pressing needs or gratification: which put nothing at interest in that grandest of Savings Institutions whereby provision is made for the wants, comforts, luxuries—if such you please to esteem pure air, and green fields, and bright flowers;—for calm repose, upon one day in seven, after the dust and grime of a toilsome week;—a repose among those scenes all the better that they have not been marred by the sciolist of landscape gardening, who rushes in to pervert or spoil that earth whereon its Creator looked, when He had made it, and “saw that it was good.”

Treating of “Open Spaces In Towns,” and in that connection describing a meeting in the Town Hall of Manchester, England, at which the munificent sum of £35,000 was subscribed on the spot for the procurement of additional public grounds; *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* (London) says aptly:

“It was distinctly understood that, in providing these parks, they were to be no mere walks or places for fashionable promenade, but healthful and enjoyable spaces for legitimate and intelligent recreation, open alike to rich and poor, to young and old, free all the year round, the sole condition of entrance being good behavior. To a town, with a population consisting in proportion so immense of the laboring classes, factory hands, men employed all day in foundries, dyeworks, and scores of other scenes of mechanical industry, more than the half of it implying an atmosphere charged with steam, smoke, or chemical vapors, and the most monotonous and unpoetical of scenery, engines, looms, and so forth, and in which at the most moderate computation, 10,000 of the inhabitants live in cellars, the proffered boon was at once seen to be of value and importance absolutely inexpressible. That beyond the suburbs there were green fields and country lanes was altogether beside the argument.”

Which all, with more to the same effect, would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to this our Worcester.

The COMMISSION have ever kept steadily in view a consistent and practicable plan of public improvement. They would enlarge ELM PARK in a way that would at once add greatly to its area and contribute a feature to its landscape which might be almost unique among Public Grounds. Newton Hill,—now enjoyed by trespass,—should be thrown open to a community that is continually climbing its easy acclivities. When,—as must very shortly be the case,—Tatnuck Brook shall be utilized for all that it can be made to be worth, a Distributing Reservoir will be located upon the summit of that eminence;—equivalent as it is in height and equi-distant as it were from both Hunt's Reservoir and Bell Pond. The two birds would thus be killed by one stone:—the people getting the pleasure-ground, and the Fire Department that cheapest and best of Engines—the incessant, irresistable flow and force of gravitation. The Hill would need no development, save a clump of trees, here and there, to interrupt a monotony of symmetrical formation; occasionally, for ornament. At a fair price there could be no acquisition that would, in connection with the Public Garden at its base, so thoroughly and wisely complete and supplement the work hitherto outlined or achieved by this COMMISSION. An unfair or exorbitant price ought not to be paid even for the Garden of Eden. But it is scarcely supposable that men whose fortunes have been made, and are rapidly augmenting, because of the attractiveness and proximity of the PARK, should desire to grasp all,—conceding nothing. An expansion of the periphery of ELM PARK, causing it to abut upon a hundred acres, where it now comes in bare contact with one or a dozen, in itself brings back upon a returning tide that bread which far-sighted and prudent proprietors should voluntarily cast upon civic waters. The Assessors will doubtless ascertain when propinquity has lent value, hitherto: but there are men and women in this City who ought not to require a civic battery to startle their pocket nerve; and who, of all else, should be swiftest to perceive that their own good fortune, with the prosperity that has fallen into their lap,

cannot be dis-associated from the policy of the City, originated by this Commission, that has so far fostered and developed their unearned increment.

The City of Worcester has formally assumed guardianship of the immemorial right of its inhabitants to the free and unrestricted use of a stone quarry;—because it is a common privilege and for the general benefit. The City of Worcester bounds—Eastwardly—hard upon four miles,—by or within one of the Great Ponds of the State—widely and favorably renowned as Lake Quinsigamond.\* The earliest settler, searching along its charming shores and slopes for a suitable site whereon to found

“A Church without a bishop,  
A State without a king,”

fell unwittingly upon an imposition of hands that well nigh raised his hair after a most uncanonical fashion. The recent emigrant from military duress in Alsace-Lorraine, or from Victoria's maternal caress in Ireland, haunts its shady nooks and finds welcome repose beside its pellucid waters. The newest arrival from Mammonia, canny and thrifty as becomes his nativity, dares that from which even William Hovey shrank; excavating the source of the Nipnapp—natural outlet of the Lake,—and reducing the volume of the entire sheet of water so that not even the frail shells of our local Boat Club can enjoy their lawfully acquired, if wrongful, easement or fee. The encroachment goes unrebuked, unchecked—is not even challenged! Shrewsbury, nor Worcester, have no interest in that lovely sheet of water. They are Issachar! and may pack their burdens,—the proper occupation for municipalities. They may dig sewers, if they do not drain; create veneers of health; condemn streets and assess betterments—the manna and quails of our modern pilgrimage. They are graciously allowed to locate Tele-graph! phone! any other? poles, at the dictation of the owners of a mercenary franchise, and to the detriment of the people who get no remuneration for the loss of their individual or corporate property. But the shore of the Lake must be *terra incognita*! its waters *mare clausum*!

---

\* See Appendices “A” and “B.”

The Lunatics of the State debar us from the Lake shore whereto we were cordially welcomed by plain Farmer Bowen; and a firm of mill-owners—aliens in fact if not at heart—plant themselves at the outlet of the Lake, determining what size of stream they can squeeze out for the Nipnapp; what volume of water shall be suffered to remain in a Lake that might merit mention with Katrine in any point of view,—were it only in the “wee sma’ hours.”

Were that WATER PARK established, recommended by this COMMISSION for more years than they care to recall, and throughout the whole time strenuously advocated; in the legal creation of which the co-operation of the intelligent and progressive Town of Shrewsbury might safely be assumed, as for every measure enuring to public advantage; there could be no difficulty in retaining a standard level for the Lake. But I Do Not black the shoes of I Care Not! and even if of angels the feet once divested of their coverings nowadays trouble no pool wherefrom healing can be derived.

*Lake Avenue* was decreed from the start, for and throughout its whole length. The consent of the Commonwealth, through its constituted authorities, had been previously accorded, and by every form of Law, under the decisions of the Supreme Court, the entire location, so much of which was originally constructed, is defined and determined as a Public Highway. But between that Avenue, protracted north from Belmont street according to the Decree, and the shore of the Lake, is a tract of land of undefined area, but of obvious advantage and convenience, for which the Commonwealth need have no uses to the exclusion of Worcester, and for which, if it would part with its ownership, it ought to accept a fair and moderate price. At present, Massachusetts owns here in Worcester a principality when, like her maniacs, she were better possessed of a devil so that only it could be cast out! Were it a private citizen, taxed for and obliged to improve or cultivate such an extensive territory, his despairing cry might well be, as he marshalled the procession, Assessors to the front! Next,—Overseers of the Poor! Worcester does somewhat in the way of out-door relief, even now; but whatsoever load she can

take from shoulders that are already bent beneath the weight of Hoosac Mountain shall be accounted to her credit in that school of the prophets which ever relucted at burdens grievous to be borne.

Thoroughly persuaded as was this Commission from the first, that the best interests of Worcester demand the acquirement, by the City, for the purposes of a *Common* or *Park*, of so much of the land lying between Lake Avenue and the Westerly shore of Quinsigamond Lake as the State will release; they have taken the pains to procure from the Registry of Deeds a statement in detail of territory and dollars, so far as they appear upon record, whereby title passed to and is now vested in the Commonwealth. *Register* Wilder will accept the thanks of the Commission for the trouble to which he put himself,—a habit alike individual and hereditary.

[COPY.]

“ COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.  
County of Worcester.

Registry of Deeds,

HARVEY B. WILDER, *Register*.  
Worcester, Jan. 9, 1884.

EDWARD W. LINCOLN, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—

I find a deed from John Bartlett to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of land, dated Oct. 14, 1870; consideration named \$700.

Also a deed from Chas. Bowen to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, of about 136 acres, dated Sept. 17, 1870, consideration named \$40,000.

Also a deed from Robert Taft, of Uxbridge, to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, amount of land not given\*, dated Aug. 30, 1870; consideration named \$36,250.

Also a deed from Henry Prentice to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, of about 32 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres, dated Sept. 14, 1870; consideration named \$20,500.

Also another deed from Henry Prentice to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, of about 12 acres, 18 rods, dated Sept. 14, 1870; consideration named \$2,500.

Also a deed from Lucy A. Watson, Executrix of Will of Sam<sup>l</sup> B. Watson, to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, of about 18 acres, 115 rods, dated Aug. 26, 1870; consideration named \$11,000.

Also a deed from John Bartlett and Silas Phillips and wife to Trustees—Worcester Lunatic Hospital, amount of land not named, dated April 24, 1871; consideration named \$2,500.

Yours truly,

HARVEY B. WILDER.”

---

\* The books of the Assessors disclose that the amount of land in question was estimated at Sixty-Two (62) acres: being valued for taxation at Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.)  
E. W. L.

The Commonwealth, it would thus appear, became and doubtless remains owner of something like 260 acres of land for which it paid the sum of \$113,450. The cost per acre varied widely ; but the tract upon which this Commission keep a covetous eye was purchased most cheaply of all.

Now why cannot this City at least get from the General Court, now in session, the terms upon which the Commonwealth will convey the tract in question, between Lake Avenue,—Northerly,—and the Lake itself, for the purposes of a *Common* or *Park*? The effort would cost nothing, being a courteous and simple inquiry which might prove futile. But it is not probable that the State would decline to accede to our request to let us have, upon reasonable terms, a territory whereof our people formerly had the enjoyment, and of which they are now in actual need for holiday recreation and constant daily resort. As heretofore suggested in these Reports, ownership and police-supervision vested in this City need not impair a single existing right; nor divest even the lunatic wards of the Commonwealth of a solitary liberty or privilege wherewith, so far as affects that land, they are now intrusted. It would merely enable Worcester to have a suitable *Common* or *Public Ground*.

The *Alderman* from Ward *Two* is the sole survivor, in official life, of that City Government which, thirty years ago, acquired ELM PARK. Not one of his associates of that day remains in the municipal service, by far the greater portion being employed upon Public Works in the Celestial City. What more fitting close to a long and useful career, in behalf of his fellow-citizens, could he desire, than to initiate the steps that will have to be taken preliminary to the acquisition from the Commonwealth of that land by the Lake Shore? A careful guard over the public expenditure can never come amiss. But there are rare periods when a judicious exercise of the public credit shall earn a just meed of gratitude from the community that is, if lightly burdened, permanently blessed thereby. And, if there be, in fact,

“a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,”

he who, in civic counsels, shall evince the quickest perception of

the opportunity, following up such appreciation by prompt action, will realize most thoroughly the ideal of a consummate public servant:—one who recognizes and fears not to fulfil an absolute, imperative duty.

All which is respectfully submitted,

(by)

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Massachusetts, January 28th, A. D., 1884.*



## APPENDIX A.

---

As everything which concerns Lake Quinsigamond must be of great, and continue of increasing, interest to the population of this City, the subjoined description of that body of water, as it appeared to the careful observer, Fifty years since, is reproduced, from WILLIAM LINCOLN's History of Worcester :—

“ Along the eastern boundary of Worcester, and partly within its territory, lies Quinsigamond Pond, sometimes called Long Pond, a beautiful sheet of water, which, in any other country, would be dignified with the name of *lake*. It extends from North to South, in crescent form, about four miles in length, presenting by reason of disproportionate breadth, the appearance of a noble river, with bold banks covered with wood, or swelling into green hills. There are twelve islands, varying in extent from a few square rods of surface to many acres. Some of them, of singular beauty, are still clothed with their original forests. At the South end, the waters, with those of Half-Moon, Round, and Flint's Ponds, which are connected with Quinsigamond, flow out in a South-Easterly direction into the town of Grafton, forming the stream anciently called ‘ Nipnapp River,’ now the little Blackstone, a principal tributary to the main stream. When the Blackstone Canal was constructed, the Ponds were raised by a dam, and made a reservoir for that work.\*

\* An estimate of the quantity of water contained in this reservoir, between high and low water mark, exhibiting the extent of surface, has been kindly furnished by Henry Snow, Esq., of Shrewsbury, made from actual admeasurement by that accurate surveyor. Low water is estimated at 2 feet 10 inches above the bottom of the flume at the Irish dam, for all water below the neck of Quinsigamond, and 1 foot 5 inches above the bottom of the flume at that point, for all above :

	<i>Surface :</i>		<i>Depth :</i>		Cubic feet.
	<i>Acres.</i>	<i>Rods.</i>	<i>Feet.</i>	<i>Inches.</i>	
Above the Old Road,	28	120	2	0	2,504,700
Quinsigamond,	487	06	8	8	61,871,898
“	17	81	2	8	1,746,415
Half-Moon Pond,	14	155	8	8	2,119,126
“	2	00	2	8	196,020
Flooded Meadows and					
River,	202	18	2	4	20,542,714
Round Pond,	6	50	8	8	898,660
Flint's Pond,	45	147	8	8	6,500,717
“	36	125	2	0	8,204,882

Making 99,579,185 cubic feet, rejecting minute fractions. About 21 millions of cubic feet cannot be drawn down by reason of the back water from the pond of the New England Village Factory.

## APPENDIX B.

---

A full description of this Pond, heartily appreciated by both the local historians, yet not even to this day fairly and fully estimated, is given at length as recited in Andrew H. Ward's History of Shrewsbury:—

\* \* \* \* \*

“This pond was called by the natives, Quinsigamond Pond, but is now better known by the name of Long Pond; it lies partly in Shrewsbury, and whether the residue is in Shrewsbury or Worcester, will probably be a subject of future investigation. Worcester was laid out in 1668, to be bounded Easterly on Quinsigamond Pond, and when Shrewsbury was laid out in 1717, it was bounded by Worcester on the West. As Keyes' survey does not include all of the Pond in this town (why he departed from the line as originally established between Shrewsbury and Worcester is not known) it would seem, if he is correct, that a part of it belongs (and there are no islands in that part) to neither Town. Long Pond extends North and South; and is a very large body of water, nearly in the form of a crescent, and is about four miles in length on the western shore; yet, on a straight line, as measured on the ice, it is but little more than three miles; its width varies from one hundred rods to three-fourths of a mile; it is the largest body of water in the County, and deserves rather the name of a Lake, than a Pond.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“There are several brooks, which empty their waters into this Pond. It is clustered with no less than twelve islands of various sizes. The first is Ram Island, at the West end of the Floating Bridge; it contains about two acres, and is mostly covered with wood. Little Pine Island, the second, is one and one-half mile down the Pond, it is about 40 rods from the Western shore; it contains half an acre, principally covered with small pines. The third is three rods South of the last, of one-fourth of an acre, covered with fruitful grape vines, and called Grape Island. The fourth is Grass Island, of one-eighth of an acre, mowed sometimes, and is twenty rods from Grape Island, and nearer the middle of the pond. Bowman's Island is the fifth, covered with wood, and lies Southeast twelve rods from Grass Island and contains three acres. The sixth is Bayberry Island, near the West shore, of about two acres. The seventh is Sherman's Island, of one and a half acre, near the east shore and covered with wood. Nearly South, and about thirty-five rods, is the eighth, called Grass Island, of one-eighth of an acre, and has been mowed. The ninth is called Shoe-Make Island, of one and a half acre, and is twenty-five rods south of Bayberry Island. The tenth is Sharp Pine Island,

of half an acre, and twenty-five rods south of Shoe-Make Island. The eleventh is a small Grass Island, half a mile south of Sharp Pine Island, of one-eighth of an acre, and twenty rods from the South-West corner of the Pond. The twelfth is called Stratton's Island, and contains one hundred and fifty acres, principally under cultivation, and has several families living upon it.

Some of the other islands are more or less cultivated, and are known by different names.

“Some idea of the boldness of the shores, the depth of the water, and the unevenness of the bottom of the pond, may be formed by viewing the land on its borders and adjacent to it. So large a body of water was not destined to lie always dormant and unimproved. This pond, and the others connected with it at the south end, unite in one outlet, which, passing in a South Easterly direction, enters the town of Grafton, and becomes a principal tributary to Blackstone River, upon which a canal is now constructing to Providence. This pond rises and falls, according as there are heavy rains and sudden thaws in the Spring, or dry seasons, about two feet; though it has been known to vary considerably more.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Stratton Island is bounded on the west and north by Long Pond, on the east by Round Pond, south by Flint's Pond, and south-west by Half-Moon Pond; all of which communicate with each other. The communication of the waters on the southwesterly part of the Island between Half-Moon and Flint's Pond has been stopped by means of a gravel causeway having been constructed there. The outlet from Long Pond is into Round Pond, and is at the North-East corner of the Island; it is very narrow, and by means of a short bridge, the Island and the main land are connected. A dam was erected here about four years ago, at a trifling expense, with a small flume and gate; by means of which the water was raised in the Pond several feet; yet, on account of its steep banks, it did not overflow so much land as might naturally have been expected. It is now in contemplation by means of a dam at this place, to raise the water still higher (from four to nine feet), for the purpose of procuring and retaining a head of water sufficient for the use of mills, &c., situated below, and manufacturing establishments about to be erected there.”

It would thus appear, from contemporary history, that there was a time when the Lake maintained a definite, scarcely fluctuating level. Could the youthful Athletes of the Quinsigamond *Boat Club*; who find intermittent occupation in screaming farce, and occasional pastime in *dolce far niente* boating; enlist their superfluous languor in any better cause than this,—of guarding and securing that peerless sheet of water in its pristine integrity?

E. W. L.

## SUPPLEMENT.

---

The subjoined special communication was addressed to the City Council, because of the imperative necessity therein indicated for certain Legislative action :—

### COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

Worcester, Massachusetts.

*Worcester, Mass., January 22d, A. D. 1884.*

TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL:

The Commission of Public Grounds would represent that they are painfully impressed with the insufficiency of the Commons and Parks, belonging to the City, for its present uses, to say nothing of its imperative future necessities. They simply ask each member of the City Council to reflect upon the distance to which the City has expanded within his individual memory.

Shall no provision be made for the future? In their Annual Report, simultaneously offered, the Commission have gone into this matter at length. What they would now submit for your consideration is, briefly, as follows:

Assuming that Commons or Parks are essential to the beauty, comfort, and development of a City such as Worcester is and trusts to continue,—shall this living generation take any steps to provide them? If yes? When and where?

As to the when,—why not now? Thirty years have elapsed, this coming March, since Worcester acquired Elm Park. Of all the members of the City Government who participated in that sagacious measure, the efficient Alderman from Ward Two alone survives in official life and in perennial vigor. Is it not time to take a fresh departure?

The Commission would most earnestly ask the Honorable Council to acquire Newton Hill for the City and add it to Elm Park, in the full conviction that no measure would so fully commend itself, not alone to those who have taxes to pay but to those who should, now and then, be privileged to enjoy free air and soil. They would submit to no extortion. The Act empowering the City to buy and hold that Hill for the purpose of a Reservoir and Park will soon expire by its own limitation. The Commission advise that the City

insist upon a restoration of the right to take; a right once accepted by a three-quarters popular vote, and subsequently eliminated from the Act through misrepresentation that it is not worth the while to expose.

And the Commission would also most urgently impress upon the Honorable Council the wisdom and necessity of obtaining, from the Commonwealth, that large tract of land lying along the westerly shore of Lake Quinsigamond, between Lake Avenue, as decreed, and low-water mark. It should be available; it should be obtainable at a fair price; the Commonwealth ought to be grateful to a purchaser that will give something for it and yet leave it in common; and it can be made still more accessible by the probable future extension of the Worcester & Shrewsbury Railroad, to Northborough and Marlborough. The sum paid by Massachusetts, for its entire freehold by the Lake, as stated upon the Registry, is set forth by the Commission, in their Annual Report. How much or little the State would part with; how little or much should satisfy the wants of an active growing City like Worcester; the Commission prefer not to estimate, leaving the decision where it must ultimately rest, with the Honorable Council subject to the General Court.

The Commission are not unmindful of the fact that different parts of the City have, or think they have, pressing wants of a similar nature. Their original plan of a Broad Avenue encircling the City was intended to supply such necessities in a measure where they could not be met otherwise. But just now they confine themselves to projects that are of imminent consequence: that would appear to be of possible realization; and that would, if achieved, give such an impulse to the future fortunes of Worcester as to place it beyond all reach of envy, hatred, or malice.

No debt should be incurred without good reason. No opportunity should be lost, for lack of reason. Parks may be luxuries in the judgment of some who will be beyond hearing, when posterity vents its maledictions upon those who buried their talent in a napkin. Yet reflect, Gentlemen of the City Council! A Common, of somewhat less than Eight Acres, due to the forethought and self denial of men who were probably never in their whole lives, possessed of One Hundred dollars in ready cash!

And a Park, or Public Garden, of Twenty-Eight acres, for which you may thank men who were esteemed ultra conservative in their day and generation,—“old fogies”—as the slang phrase was; but whose little finger upon the throttle was thicker, as it seems at this distance from the event, than all your loins as they bear heavily upon the brakes.

Shall not the City of Worcester repose some trust in the future?

Put some investment at interest, letting posterity for whom the debt was incurred, gladly pay the principal?

Shall she not afford her sons and daughters some little cheer; some trifling respite by hill or dale from grinding toil; though the return should be slightly less than cent per cent as reckoned upon the ledger, perhaps only a deposit where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where Barre & Gardner is neither watered nor preferred.

In this, his fifteenth and final year of official service, the Chairman of the Commission appeals to you, Gentlemen of the City Council, to advance the



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1884.

WORCESTER:

PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,

311 MAIN STREET.

1885.

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

~~P 17744~~

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1898.





# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

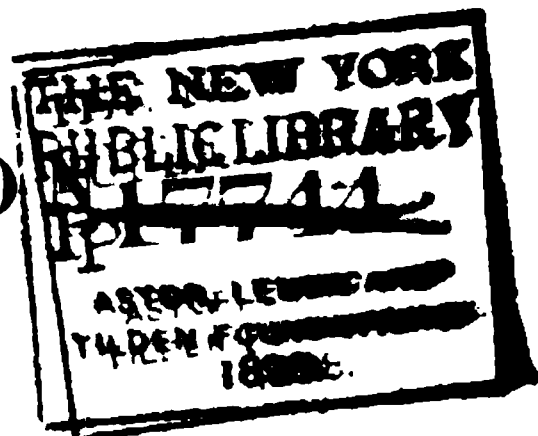
## PUBLIC GROUNDS,

OF THE

## CITY OF WORCESTER,

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YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1884.



---

WORCESTER:

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1885.



# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

### COMMISSION

#### OF

# PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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*To the Honorable CITY COUNCIL:*

The “ Report of their acts and doings, of the condition of the Public Grounds and Shade-Trees thereon, and in said Streets and Highways, and an account of Receipts and Expenditures for the same,” for the official year ending with the 30th day of November ultimo, is herewith respectfully submitted by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, in compliance with the 21st Section of the Municipal Charter :—

CITY OF WORCESTER

*In account with*

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,

*Dr.:*

To Appropriation : A. D. 1884,	\$7,000 00
--------------------------------	------------

*Revenue:*

By sale of Grass from Elm Park,	50 00
	<hr/>
	\$7,050 00

*Cr.: Expended—*

For Grading and other labor,	\$2,856 08
Hire of men and teams,	104 60
Plants, trees, and setting out,	1,243 29

For Manure and loam,	619 54
Grass and other seed,	54 95
Printing, advertising, &c.,	59 53
Hardware, tools, and repairs,	229 91
Stamps and stationery,	6 55
Wall Stone,	459 37
Tree-guards and wire plant-guards,	555 76
Lumber and carpentry,	344 29
Flag-staff, carting, and setting,	108 37
Settees and repairs (Common and Elm Park),	160 75
Raising wooden bridge, as per contract,	100 00
Fountain, alterations, and repairs,	61 54
Trellises for tool-house,	24 00
Measurements by Eng. Dep't,	12 23
Pump on Common, and renovation of same,	13 30
Travelling expenses (Legis. Hearings),	9 00
" Woods and Forests," subscription to,	3 75
Official Transcript of " Act "—Sec'y of State,	75
Blacksmith,	17 59
	<hr/>
	\$7,045 15
<i>Savings</i> —for Sinking Fund,	\$4 85

In the Inaugural Address of *Mayor P. Emory Aldrich*, January 6, A. D. 1862, occurs the following passage :

" Among the papers referred to the present Board of Aldermen, I find the following order introduced to the notice of your immediate predecessors, and was by them referred to you :

' That the Mayor be instructed to apply to the Legislature for the necessary powers for the appointment of a Board of Commissioners, who shall have charge of the Shade-Trees and Public Grounds of the City, and whose mode of election and term of office shall be similar to the Commissioners of Hope Cemetery.'

" I commend this subject to your favorable consideration. There certainly is nothing in the external appearance of our City, during the spring, summer and autumn months, which adds more to its attractiveness than the great variety and beauty of the trees which border our streets and fill and beautify the public and private grounds of the City. These should be preserved and their lines extended, and this should be done upon some well considered plan, dictated by sound judgment and good taste, and can undoubtedly be much better accomplished by a permanent board, selected from

the citizens at large, than by committees appointed every year from the City Council, and at no greater expense."

The advice of *His Honor* was heeded and an Act in accordance with the order, thus endorsed, met the sanction of the General Court and the then Governor—Andrew. Its acceptance by the people was exacted as a pre-requisite to its validity; and of receiving that it well nigh failed. It was submitted at the polls on the day of the Annual State Election, Tuesday, November 4th, A. D. 1862, at which date considerable interest was manifested in local politics because of the very dubious military prospect and situation.

"Inter arma silent leges."

Perhaps so: but, at any rate, Shade-Trees have rarely attracted much attention, *flagrante bello*, save in the exceptional instance, or poetical license, of Birnam Wood. The people were thinking of Fair Oaks, or Seven Pines; and bestowed little thought or care upon the Elms or Maples nearer home. It is also more than likely that no one took the precaution to supply ballots. Whatsoever the cause, but Four Hundred and Fifty-One votes were cast upon the article in the warrant, as stated:—

"To give in their votes by Yes,— or No,— upon the question of accepting an Act passed by the last Legislature of this Commonwealth, entitled, 'An Act relating to Commissioners on Shade-Trees and Public Grounds, in the City of Worcester.'"

#### WARDS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Yes,	41	54		23		41	53	42—254
No,	4	4	25		157	2	3	2—197

The Act, having been accepted, was immediately put in force. It subsequently became a part of the City Charter, being incorporated in that instrument upon its Revision, A. D. 1866.

A Roll of the COMMISSIONERS who have filled the office since its creation to this period of its probable approaching extinction, is inserted here for future information and convenient reference.

The list will be found to comprise many names that should live in the grateful remembrance of their fellow-citizens :—

A. D. 1863.

Edward Earle, 3 years,  
James B. Blake, 2 years,  
Henry Prentice, 1 year.

A. D. 1864.

Henry Prentice,  
Edward Earle,  
James B. Blake.

A. D. 1865.

George Jaques,  
Henry Prentice,  
Edward Earle.

A. D. 1866.

David S. Messinger,  
George Jaques,  
Henry Prentice.

A. D. 1867.

Obadiah B. Hadwen.  
D. S. Messinger,  
George Jaques.

A. D. 1868.

George Jaques,  
O. B. Hadwen,  
D. S. Messinger.

A. D. 1869.

Leonard W. Sturtevant,\*  
Stephen Salisbury, jr.,  
George Jaques,  
O. B. Hadwen.

A. D. 1870.

Edward W. Lincoln,  
Stephen Salisbury, jr.,  
George Jaques,†  
O. B. Hadwen.

A. D. 1871.

Ossian L. Hatch,  
Edward W. Lincoln,  
Stephen Salisbury, jr.

A. D. 1872.

Stephen Salisbury, jr.,  
O. L. Hatch,  
Edward W. Lincoln.

A. D. 1873.

Edward W. Lincoln,  
Stephen Salisbury, jr.,  
O. L. Hatch.

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\*Mr. Sturtevant declined to serve. Mr. Salisbury, jr., elected, *vice*. It should be recorded here that it was at the suggestion of Mr. Sturtevant, and as a result of his conviction of its necessity, founded upon his experience as an Alderman of the city, that the original Order was introduced in the City Council.—E. W. L.

†Mr. Jaques resigned, and Mr. Hadwen was elected, *vice*.

PUBLIC GROUNDS.

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A. D. 1874.	A. D. 1880.
O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr.	O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr.
A. D. 1875.	A. D. 1881.
Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln.	Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln.
A. D. 1876.	A. D. 1882.
Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen.	Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen.
A. D. 1877.	A. D. 1883.
O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr.	O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr.
A. D. 1878.	A. D. 1884.
Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln.	Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen, Edward W. Lincoln.
A. D. 1879.	A. D. 1885.
Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen.	Edward W. Lincoln, Stephen Salisbury, jr., O. B. Hadwen.

The infancy of the COMMISSION was feeble ; its steps tottering. Its opportunities, too, were small, although such as they were they were improved to the utmost. Whatsoever could be accomplished with contracted means was done in the most effectual manner. The COMMISSION were early fortunate in obtaining a large lot of well-grown and thrifty trees from the Nursery of Samuel H. Colton,

then retiring from business ; and to that lucky chance is it owing that many of our older streets are now in the enjoyment of ample shade. If little was achieved but the planting of shade trees it was because public sentiment exacted nothing more. The development of our Public Grounds might bide its time—the COMMISSION possessing its soul in patience the while. That time came when the people got tired of surrendering Front and Park streets for a switching-yard ; of clambering over freight-trains in their chronic condition of immobility across the Common ; and of being taunted when they complained with their original easy complaisance ;—corporate greed perverting the generous concession of an easement into the grant of an irrevocable fee !

“ In 1886, when the City of Worcester, then a town, desired these railroad facilities, they acted in town meeting, and appointed a Committee to deal with the railroad and made an arrangement with them authorizing them to come in over the Common. I don't claim under the vote that that was a contract absolute in its terms, by which the town of Worcester sold, or contracted to these railroads the right to maintain a track upon the Common forever ; but it is morally a contract.,” etc., etc.\*

But, after all, said the attorney from Fitchburg,

“ The grievance is not that they are troubled with Park, and Front, and the other street ; the grievance is that the Common is disturbed by the presence of this track. Although a sentimental grievance, it is entitled to be heard. Perhaps, with our uncultivated country eyes, we don't appreciate the beauties of the Worcester Common. They come here and ask for that Common with those eye-sores upon it which they don't pretend are to be removed ;” etc., etc.

*Ex-Mayor* Aldrich went further and the Common fared worse :

“ Well, the Common that is spoken of you have seen. When the word ‘ Common ’ is used we are accustomed to think of such a beautiful Park as Boston Common ; some large area beautifully adorned with trees and walks, a place to which the inhabitants resort for recreation, fresh air and amusement ; where the children go to play and for recreation. But this little patch of ground that is called Worcester Common is used for none of these purposes. You have not heard a single witness, from the Mayor who looks after the interests of everybody in the city, or from any of the witnesses,—intelligent people all,—you have not heard a single word about that Common

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\*Argument of Hon. P. Emory Aldrich, Counsel for the Worcester & Nashua R. R. Corporation, before a Committee of the General Court.



being the resort of our citizens, old or young, men or women. They may say it is because the railroad is there, but everybody knows that is not the reason. On one corner is the Lock-up, around which are gathered, from day to day and from night to night, all the loafers and stragglers of the city. On another part of it is an old burial ground. On another part of it is the old South Church, a most respectable and ancient edifice, which is yet fresh in its inculcation of good and wholesome doctrines, I doubt not; and at another corner is one of our ancient school-houses. Aside from the railroads, from the dilapidated fence which encloses it, and all the surroundings of that Common, you will know by a single glance that it is not the resort of our citizens who would like a Park or Common for use."

The picture was drawn to the life, though the tints might well have been shaded more deeply.

The COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS was then constituted and organized as it is now, and as it has been for the last Fifteen years substantially without change. The appearance of the Common was and had been alleged as a reproach. Should it be suffered longer in its neglected and repulsive condition? was the question for the City Council to determine, by which body alone could the necessary appropriations be made. Fortunately, the situation was appreciated; and upon official assurances of cordial and substantial co-operation,\* the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS commenced their work of reclamation and improvement. The dilapidated School-house was torn down and carted off; earth was purchased and hauled in by the thousands of yards; Paths were literally built up, like causeways, in some places to a height of four and five feet; lawns were constructed against them and graded to a level, or uniform slope, according to that system of natural engineering which adapts itself to the lay of the land; and, after all was ready for it, grass-seed was sown in profusion,—a generous allowance, whereby only can a firm and tenacious sward be secured in sufficient season. It was a more difficult task to reduce the knoll where "slept so many of the rude forefathers of the hamlet." Even that was accomplished by the exercise of tact and patience; as little disturbance as possible being caused, no removal permitted, nor what would have been worse, no morbid notoriety provoked. So busy was the axe, at

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\*In securing which, *Alderman* F. H. Kelley was mainly instrumental.

first, that some apprehended the wanton destruction of all the trees upon the Common. But many were dead, or dying; more were deformed or at best unsuitable; all were too closely compacted for their own thrifty growth; and appearances at present are very deceptive, if too many were not spared. For the increased vitality induced by the air and sunlight, once let in, quickly occupied whatever space had been made vacant with a fresh exuberance of branch and foliage. Too much shade is, if possible, a greater evil than too little: a fact that might be recognized more clearly than it seems to be, along many of our public streets, were abutters more placable.

The COMMISSION have never wished to enclose the Common; assuming that animals would be controlled from trespass, and not caring to confine their fellow-citizens within or without a fence. But they have deemed that a suitable Kerb might be protracted around its entire boundary;—partially for ornament and protection; more especially to define its limits. So far as concerns this hope, they console themselves as they look along Salem Square, with the old adage (has any one ever proved its truth?) that all things come to him who waits.

Nor have they been unmindful of the possibilities that might be caused to result from the unsurpassed height whence is derived a large portion of our Water supply. It was a cherished fancy of the late D. Waldo Lincoln—(which he had hoped to see realized)—as it were a vision of a *Jet d' Eau*,—carrying a hollow stream six (6) inches in diameter and impelled by the full head from Nipnet Pond. Sympathising with that dream of his, and knowing that any provision for its realization would answer for another, less ambitious, play of Water; arrangements were made to insert a T for the especial purpose, when the High-Service pipe was extended throughout Front street. There it is and may be found, whenever the people elect to have a *Jet d' Eau* compared with which all others in the known world would sink into insignificance. Provided with that,—there need be no doubt, whether on July 4th, or whatsoever holiday,—as to how the inhabitants of Town and County can be pleasantly and

as safely occupied or amused. Water Works against Fire Works! Water will win every time, and at infinitely less cost!

The COMMISSION borrow no trouble concerning the future uses of the Common. They discussed the subject years since, and the lapse of time has not altered their conclusions. They could easily reconcile themselves to the occupancy of the Westerly side, by a new City Hall, whenever the public shall determine that they cannot longer postpone indulgence in such an architectural spree. They realize that such a location would be central and suitable; and that its occupation for that purpose would but perpetuate, as it were, an immemorial custom. They know that the choice of that site would meet with ready acceptance; while the mere proposition to select another would, if meant in earnest, provoke the fiercest sectional animosity and discord. The COMMISSION take the world as they find it; wishing and hoping to improve it as far as lies within their power; at any rate satisfied that their fellow-citizens, should they finally decide to put their Town Meeting-House upon their own Public Grounds, will not have gone far astray. A substantial and symmetrical building dedicated to inevitable public uses, and therefore in continuous and busy occupation, will subject the land to a much better possession than if it were reclaimed from its present theological easement but to be trampled down, or cut up into countless foot-paths, by a herd of lawless boot-heels. To the remark that it could be guarded from ravage and kept green,—the reply is as true, as conclusive, that hitherto the Police have been the worst, because incorrigible, offenders.

ELM PARK was let severely alone until the work upon the Common had been substantially finished. In fact, to judge from flings and squibs in the newspapers, some sceptics had begun to despair of ever seeing anything effected upon that then forlorn stretch of sand and swamp. Acquired A. D. 1854, it lay fallow so far as its improvement went; and would indeed appear to have been wholly neglected after it was once inclosed by a fence and girt with a row of maples. It afforded a handy dumping-ground for the Highway-Department, whose semi-annual depos-

its of crinoline and tomato-cans were profusely supplemented by a lavish contribution of all manner of uncleanness from the casual job-wagon or wheelbarrow. The anaconda of the circus "shuffled off its mortal coil" in the heats of June, and the decomposition of abnormal cats added their peculiar and potent perfume. Over the whole twenty-eight acres *Mephitis Americana* bore uncontested sway. "Will the COMMISSION never do anything for Elm Park?" "Can they not at least get a plan?" Such and similar was the outcry in the newspapers, but eight years ago, from some who only comprehended the haste which makes waste. The COMMISSION were firm in the opinion that it was best to do one thing at a time, and to do that well. They did not think that the City would be willing to bear the expense of improving the two Parks, simultaneously. No time was lost in reality; for the possibilities of ELM PARK were closely studied, the while; and without subjecting the people to the payment of such bills as may arrest the eye of the curious searcher who would fain find out how much it cost to "get a plan" of Quinsigamond! When the task had been once commenced, nothing was suffered to interrupt its prosecution. Through Summer and Winter, in heat and cold, nay, in despite of ice and snow—the work was almost continuous. So various was the nature of the soil, that something was practicable almost always. Peat could be excavated in Winter better than at any other time. Had it not been so, it would be no exaggeration to say that what has already been accomplished would have required at least a third more time for its equally thorough execution. The change that has been effected is obvious enough, and is the theme of frequent compliment from private and official sources, from fellow-townsmen and the stranger within our gates. Clear and sparkling Pools have usurped the place of the original swamp. Brier and brush yield room to the Spice-Bush or Rhododendron; and the omnipresent skunk-cabbage has vanished forever before the invasion of the Azalea and Iris. The COMMISSION may never realize their dream of introducing and growing at least one specimen of every plant, or shrub, or tree, that can be made to thrive in that particular locality. But this, at worst, may be

asserted with confidence, that few Public Grounds, where there were so many natural obstacles to overcome, offer a greater diversity; that none surpass it, whether for floriage or foliage, when the relative expenditure is considered; and that, as a simple combination of Garden and Shrubbery, without any pretension to finical Architecture or topiary conceits, and as the net product of eight years of very limited labor; it need not shrink from any honest comparison. That which is visible upon a cursory inspection, is but a slight manifestation of what has been accomplished in the whole period. Every cubic foot now covered with water or ice has been excavated, mainly by the labor of four or five men, availing themselves of the wheelbarrow,—save to an insignificant extent, where the earth itself was a sufficient inducement to the owners of teams to aid in the removal. There is not a lineal perch of wall but was constructed by the stated daily industry of one man—*Mr. Steven Rowe*—to whom due praise has been accorded in these Reports heretofore. The physical strength of others may have been brought to his aid, where needed: but the tried capacity, so conspicuous by every bank of those POOLS was his individual and exclusive merit.

As there was but slight change, throughout that whole time, in the *personnel* of the COMMISSION, so also has its policy been consistent and steady in the uniform direction of municipal development. There are ways enough of local improvement: but some one must indicate, perhaps urge them upon an audience at times reluctant, or even unwilling. If those ways tended to an immediate pecuniary return, the task would not be so difficult nor lack volunteer advocates. But when you argue that a Broad Avenue should be constructed, to encircle the town and open up its suburbs for gradual or ultimate settlement; selfishness anticipates a possible competition with its own land, which is nigher the centre of population, and like as not will not be appreciated by throwing upon the market a desirable and cheaper though more remote section. To diffuse and disperse the body of inhabitants over a wider area does not tend to augment the rents of crowded lodging and tenement

houses. But yet diffusion and dispersion was the policy of that thoughtful student of affairs — John S. C. Knowlton — ; enforced when he was Mayor and advocated by him always ; and it is a policy that commends itself to those of us who were privileged with his instruction and have survived to profit from the fruits of his teaching.\*

There is vacant land enough, in Worcester, to supply every family with a homestead, ample, if not lavish in its proportions. But it is not for those who prefer dust or mud, if they can but step on pavements : or who imitate the animals in gregariousness and can only live in a herd. Society is well enough in its way, but it should not be suffered to stand in the way of humanity ! There are certain luxuries that we have come to consider necessities, which will not accompany us into the suburbs and might have to be dispensed with for the time. But even gas has advanced a long way toward the Lake ; and the main conduit, fed from Nipnet or Tataesset, already dismisses its overflow into the more profound level of Quinsigamond. It was to develop this territory, and all like it, that the construction of LAKE, and PARK, AVENUES, was first advised, and thereafter persistently urged, in these Reports. The shallow critics, — who eject their occasional feeble sneer at “useless pleasure drives” —, have not the faintest conception of the vast impulse which those AVENUES, in *esse* and *posse*, have given to the growth of the suburban districts. Let them but be connected, — North and South, — from West Boylston street to Lincoln, by Barber’s ; and from Southbridge street, around Mount St. James, to Granite, over the ledge ; and their present utility will be increased beyond measure, each new step in the progression extending to the “plain people” a decided because practical benefit. To the visitor from abroad who looks around in vain for some new architectural monstrosity in school-houses, — some reckless extravagance in City-Halls, — let Worcester proudly point to her acknowledged jewels — Wide Avenues that environ, — Public Grounds that adorn, and make happy, —

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\*It was during his Mayoralty, and mainly through his influence, that ELM PARK was acquired by the City.

above all, detached, and rural homes which shelter a thrifty and contented population !

The newspaper scribe (him of the Argus-eye for example), endueth his seven-league boots and hieth him to the spot where broad roads are supposed to meet, and the same old four-legged roadsters to skip at the same old gait. He cooleth his body and spirits simultaneously ; (much to his disgust they do not warm their spirits along Park Avenue !) and his languid zeal for municipal development subsideth to his very heels even as the mercury into its bulb. Or, he “lardeth the lean earth” upon a sweltering day of June, ostensibly to write up an account of some famous strawberry plantation, but in reality sampling the fruit with both hands to the exclusion of note-book and pencil ! What wonder that he is blind even to the magnitude of our local Ice-Harvest ! as two-thirds of it are borne along that very road in an interminable caravan. The time for LAKE AVENUE to be fully appreciated is near at hand. That time might be accelerated by its completion—Northwardly : yet, for certain reasons, we must be patient. PARK AVENUE is its own present justification. Already has it more than repaid its cost, by the taxable value of edifices that would never even have been thought of but for its location and opening. It supplies an unrivalled thoroughfare from Northville to New Worcester, with a saving to the traveller of well-nigh a mile and a half. Once, along its route a house was scarcely to be seen. Now,—you may look sharp before you discover unoccupied lots between frequent buildings. And it fulfils the prediction of its advocates. The Streets—a-down the hill-side, Westerly, find in it their ready and convenient outlet. But for PARK AVENUE, every street running West from Chestnut would end, as it were, in a *cul-de-sac*. Therefore, let the scoffer take clay from that Avenue and, moistening it with spittle from the latter-day Seer, lay it upon his eye-balls to clear away the unwonted film that obscures the gaze of Argus !

November 4th, A. D., 1884, the legal voters of Worcester were duly warned to give in their votes upon the question, thus submitted :

“ Shall an Act passed by the Legislature of the Commonwealth, in the year Eighteen Hundred and eighty-two, entitled

‘ An Act authorizing Cities and Towns to lay out Public Parks within their limits’ be accepted?”

The result of the poll, as returned in detail, is inserted here, for more convenient reference and information in future :

	Yes.	No.
Ward 1 : Precinct 1 :	335	5
“ “ “ 2 :	224	8
Ward 2 : Precinct 1 :	320	13
“ “ “ 2 :	147	23
“ “ “ 3 :	201	24
Ward 3 : Precinct 1 :	133	13
“ “ “ 2 :	225	3
Ward 4 : Precinct 1 :	258	4
“ “ “ 2 :	295	16
Ward 5 : Precinct 1 :	199	18
“ “ “ 2 :	302	5
“ “ “ 3 :	440	5
Ward 6 : Precinct 1 :	220	9
“ “ “ 2 :	223	3
Ward 7 : Precinct 1 :	347	7
“ “ “ 2 :	361	3
Ward 8 : Precinct 1 :	451	5
“ “ “ 2 :	413	17
		Yes, 5,094 :
		No, 181 :

Had the people examined the Act, which they adopted thus emphatically ; and did they comprehend the extremely restricted scope of its provisions? Its text was published as an Appendix to the Annual Report of this COMMISSION, the year previous ; and had been inserted at full length, it is believed, twice during the twelvemonth, in the *Daily Spy*. Yet how few there seem to be who are aware that the PARKS-COMMISSION, created by that Act, are invested with jurisdiction only over such Public Grounds as may be acquired by their own act ! The law clothes them with no authority over the *Common* ; or *ELM*, or even *LAKE, PARK*. “ The sole care, superintendence, and management of the Public Grounds belonging to said City of Worces-



ter, and of all the shade and ornamental trees standing and growing thereon, and also of all the Shade and Ornamental trees standing and growing in or upon any of the public streets and highways of said city ; " is still, as it has been for a generation, in the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. The Act of 1882 makes no reference to any such bodies in existence, and has no provision for their supersedure ; which now, as always, ensues only upon impeachment by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of each branch of the City Council.

Of course it is competent for the City to retain two Commissions, whether they are needed, or not. But the question will continually recur, which presents itself already,—is not one Commission wholly superfluous? There can be no doubt that either could discharge all the duties incumbent upon the two ; and that, with greater certainty and better direction of purpose. Why, then, should not the General Court be asked to terminate the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, on May 1st prox., when the new PARKS-COMMISSION will come to life? The power over the Public Grounds now owned by Worcester, so long exercised by the present Commission ; as well as over the Shade-Trees, &c., &c., might be transferred, in explicit terms, to the last created body. And it would be better if in the precise language of Section 21, of the Municipal Charter, which has an accepted interpretation and meaning. The Report, required to be made by the PARKS-COMMISSION " to the City Council, annually in the month of December," were wisely deferred, by an amendment, either to March or April ; as the official year of that Commission does not commence until May, and much out-door work will often be done during the five months from December to May, whereof some account should be timely rendered.

The subject is especially commended to the *Honorable* CITY COUNCIL, not as one personally concerning the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS ; but as to which they are prompted by their perception of what will enure to the public welfare, in the interest of official simplicity and unity. At present, and until the law is changed, the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS will continue, of three members, who will have all that they care to

do. On and after May 1st, with the law yet unaltered, there will be a PARKS-COMMISSION, constituted of five members, who will have no legitimate occupation but that which they can contrive, and for which they may secure the co-operation of the City Council. Suppose that the PARKS-COMMISSION should go on and acquire areas of territory, in different portions of the City, as it ought, as the people created it expressly to do, and, for omitting which, it would deserve to be summarily abolished! Which shall have jurisdiction in the premises? The Act of 1882 confers it upon the PARKS-COMMISSION. But the City Charter vests "the sole care, superintendence and management of the Public Grounds" of Worcester in the existing COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to which is also assigned the oversight of the Shade-Trees. Admitting that a General Law creating Boards or Commissions throughout the Commonwealth, when and wherever the law is accepted by the people, may be construed to over-rule or repeal sections in the municipal charter of Worcester,—upon the sole ground of inconsistency! (for there is no repealing clause of any nature!) what will be the upshot when it comes to matters of finance? Shall the City Council be obliged to appropriate one sum for the Common, Elm Park, Lake Park, together with the Shade-Trees; and an entirely distinct amount for such Parks as may be acquired under the Act of 1882? Of course, such separate accounting is practicable, howsoever perplexing in practice. But the real question is,—Would it be wise to retain the dual system? And, if unwise, why should it be thought worth the while?

Of the SHADE-TREES of the City,—What shall be said by the COMMISSION? if they

"nothing extenuate,  
"Nor set down aught in malice."

They have been planted, by the hundred, in what seemed to be the fittest places; and the later and newest, so far as Nature is concerned, invariably did well. The vernal season was unusually favorable, soaking rains falling shortly after the roots were in the ground. Nursery-grown, young, and thrifty, there is no

valid reason why trees along our Streets should not survive and flourish, if only man will leave them alone, and the elements are not downright unpropitious. But man will not leave them alone. An example of wanton injury, rarely excelled even by the most expert in malicious mischief, may be seen along Summer street near its intersection with Thomas. The jack-knife squad in that instance hacked effectually and more industriously than usual. It is not often that they destroy ten or a dozen trees at once. Of course, the offenders have not been caught. The sufferers—the trees—were born dumb and could make no complaint, nor hold out a reward for detection. Others,—whose duty it might appear, to trace and find the authors of such offences against the public, were born blind; or have become saturated in the delusion that

“ Optics sharp it needs, I wcen,  
To see what is not to be seen.”

But the worst foe with which the Shade-Trees of the City have to contend, in their arduous struggle for existence, is

“ Man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority ; ”

who, having obtained a license to move his ten-cent back-house over a public way ; so perverts his liberty as to virtually monopolize the way itself, incommode the people, put in abeyance the rights of every abutter along the route ; and,—his particular delight,—mutilate and disfigure each and all the Shade-Trees that his worthless old wreck can be constrained to hit. He cares not for the damage that is done ; he takes no pains to prevent its happening ; he never even attempts to remove the unsightly traces of his destructive passage. Would any one see for himself, what this new Pilgrim's Progress was able to accomplish for Lincoln Street ? The Poet has declared that

“ this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

It would seem, therefore, that the lofty Elms and mighty ledges of Lincoln Street were an ample storehouse of doctrine ; scarcely

needing to be supplemented by the locomotive theology of an old ramshackle chapel. If the House of God! shall be thus migratory; flitting betwixt two opposite sects, nor halting long enough to settle their conflicting schisms; how shall it be truthfully termed His abiding-place? The Ark of the Covenant was a long while in motion, it is true. But then what better could be expected from a Wandering Jew? One, too, who was on the militant "make." For when that Ark did finally come to a halt, it stayed where it was put. No "little tin gods on wheels" clattered through the Holy City, or got a license from the Aldermen of Zion to block the way to the Mount of Olives.

Has not the time arrived, at last, when there should be one and the same law for Phelim O'Toole and Antique Drool? Both are citizens of distinction in their several ways; it being but a difference in degree which is the more eminent,—him who rams home the cartridge or him who tends vent! Each pays taxes, and between them the Law itself recognizes no disparity. Under what rule of equity, or ethics, do the *Honorable* MAYOR AND ALDERMEN allow Dives to perpetrate a nuisance in our public streets which they are inexorable in forbidding to Lazarus?

ELM PARK became a resort of over-increasing popularity throughout the season. The first warm, sunny day attracted its swarm of nurse-maids, with their infant charges; few of whom failed to find amusement in the graceful movements of the water-fowl, or the simple sheen and sparkle of the rippling waves. The Pools continued unusually full throughout the year; at this time of writing being needlessly and almost injuriously flooded. The work of surmounting their walls with a flat, if rough, coping; essential as it is to the comfort of all grown people, who love to sit and watch the water; and absolutely indispensable to the safety of children, who are constantly launching their tiny boats in it; has been vigorously prosecuted. It is a labor that can be taken up, or intermitted, according as the weather, and the imperative needs of planting or weeding, allow. The repression of weeds, by the way, was no sinecure, A. D., 1884.

Purslane, in especial, had to be hauled off by the cart-load ; and chick-weed luxuriated in the frequent, vivifying showers. Yet, all the while, there was a steady progression in the construction of that coping, which now lacks comparatively little of completion. It is likely that another, thin, layer of stone may be required upon the two westerly angles of the wall to the Diamond Pool, which has subsided somewhat in the peaty ooze wherein it was imbedded. That will be the better and cheaper method of re-gaining the requisite elevation above the average water level ; as it is wholly unlikely that the subsidence of that wall, hitherto regular and uniform, will ever result in serious trouble. Peat is curious in this,—that whatsoever it once takes to its embrace, it continues to hold in a grip as unrelaxing as that of the Octopus.

*The Drainage of ELM PARK* is what it could, not what it should, be. The only outlet for surplus water, as things were, had to be found in the sewer through Highland, and Sever, *Streets*. It is virtually climbing up hill ; a task always hard for water and one to which compulsion does not reconcile it. A legacy from the late *Gov. Lincoln* was expended in constructing that outlet ; so that the City will have the opportunity of supplying its first drain for ELM PARK, whenever the Crystal Street sewer shall reach within a practicable distance. The COMMISSION have no desire to underrun the Park with a system of drains, like that whose false gospel has deluded so many preachers upon the Terracultural circuit. The subsoil, whether of Peat or Sand, is just moist enough now for all floricultural purposes. It does not become droughty, nor yet waterlogged. Where the *Pæony* and *Tigridia* flourish, side by side, what better need be asked ? If the *Iris* and *Lilium* are at home, in another part of the ground, why not leave well enough alone ?

“De te fabula narratur.”

He was well ; would be better ; took physic, and died !

But,—there is under-drainage, the hobby of tile manufacturers ; and—drainage. Of the latter, ELM PARK will have ultimate need. For at least eighteen (18) inches of water remain in the Pools, after every drop has been drawn off that

can be, through the sewer in Highland *Street*. The natural and original outlet, for all the brooks that coursed through what is now ELM PARK, was around the base of Newton Hill. There was a ford in Pleasant *Street*, before Beaver Brook was reached, through which, the writer has often ridden, in boyhood; and, stopping in which, the passing farmer was wont to water his team of,—in that day,—oxen. The extension of Elm *Street*, and the construction of the road through the Park, intercepted those water-courses; stagnating them, and converting a meadow into a swamp; precisely as the Dam-Builders have done, below us, along the Blackstone. Now and then, some one, “wise in his own conceit,” refers to Lincoln Brook as taking its rise at the S. E. corner of Elm and Russell *Streets*. A copious spring always existed at that spot; but the Winter was a disappointment to the boys in the English, and Latin, schools, when they could not skate over the frozen surface to the very head-waters, cutting their hocky-sticks from the pollard Willows in the land of Dr. John Green. An affluent poured a strong volume of water through what is now mowing land of Mr. Merrifield. This latter runlet is at present diverted into the Highland *Street* Sewer, west of Sever *Street*. And still another stream, lively enough in a rainy season, came down the slope near where Dix *Street* now is; finding its way into Lincoln Brook at the point where John, is extended from West, *Street*.

Sooner or later it will become imperatively necessary to draw off the water, in order to clean out the Pools, or make repairs to their walls. A vast quantity of silt and leaves is finding its way to the bottom, all the time; as much on Saints-days as when the “heathen rage.”

The very Pools were constructed under difficulties. In numerous spots a boat drawing but eighteen (18) inches of water will touch upon the ridge of some coffer dam that was unavoidably left, when the flood burst in and interrupted work. But argument is not needed to prove that there should be complete control over the entire contents of these Pools,—fluid, or solid. How to obtain it, was the question for the COMMISSION to solve. They could not excavate towards PARK AVENUE.

The mound of Azaleas and Rhododendrons, built with hundreds of yards of Peat and Sand; but to be built over again after each successive subsidence, as the bottom of the adjoining Pool was uplifted; of itself opposed a sufficient barrier. Nor would anything be saved by approaching PARK AVENUE in that direction: since, although the civic authorities might be overpersuaded to continue the main Sewer far enough, it was equally clear that they ought not. By excavating towards Elm Street, an additional Pool would be gained; of a clean, gravelly bottom, with firm banks and practicable approaches. A gate or flume might be put in there, without peril from leakage, which could not be predicated confidently of any other spot; and which is not now the case with the present outlet into Highland Street. The new Pool would penetrate deeply into the heart of the grove that has been developed to the South-West of the Park; and ought to furnish a charming retreat when planted out, as it will be the coming Spring, with dense copses of flowering and fragrant shrubs.

Throughout their operations, the raucous voice of the *Park-Ass*\* has been audible, as he brayed into every ear, shorter and less pendulous than his own, that there would soon be no dry land left! The Architect of the Universe, after covering three-fifths of the surface of the globe with water, looked upon His work and pronounced it good. The COMMISSION,

“ Si licet parva componere magnis,”      ♦

have submerged but one-sixth† of ELM PARK and doubt that they have perpetrated the unpardonable sin. If worst comes to worst,—they will take an appeal from the *Park-Ass* to a haphazard jury of boys and girls who love to skate or pull an oar. After a life-long acquaintance with that locality, whereby to guide their steps; the COMMISSION can afford to let anonymous vacuity tumble into the pit that it has digged for itself.

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\**Asinus Vulgaris*: A species wholly distinct from the variety—*Consummatus*, that went astray in the “Grass” on the Common, ten years ago, or more.

E. W. L.

†Since the statement in the text, an exact computation by Engineer McClure determines the entire water area to be but 3.41 acres!—E. W. L.

*The Wind*, at times, sweeps with great violence across ELM PARK,—in about equal strength from the North-West or South-West. In resistance,—to prevent snow-drifts ; and, as well, to check the blighting influence of hurricanes that are nearer of kin to the blizzard or sirocco, as they chance to blow from the pole or equator ; rows of evergreen trees were long since planted. Some of them have attained a conspicuous and stately growth, fulfilling their purpose effectively and surely. Indeed, it has been objected that they offer so dense an obstruction that they intercept too much the picturesque outlook over the Park itself. If such fault is real, it bids fair to be corrected after a lawless and ugly fashion. The City is poor enough to possess a sneak-thief, whose appetite for larceny takes the form of a craving for evergreen-trees ; and whom cultivated greed has taught, after the lore of the schools, to “ get the best.” Mutilated stumps are all that remain to show, where for years past, his stealthy depredations have extended. The Scotch Pine,—the Blue Spruce,—our own native Weymouth Pine,—have each in turn supplied this devout thief with his Christmas-tree whereon to hang mementoes of the Christ-Child. So much a matter of course has this depredation become, that the Police were specially requested to keep a sharp look-out prior to Christmas, 1884. Doubtless, the night-cap was there : the tree thief certainly put in his appearance, with his horse and cart ! Might it not be possible, with a police-force of eighty men (no women ?) to interfere with this particular form of celebrating the Nativity ? There are other crimes against nature than peddling unlicensed beer, or turning water into wine ! strange as the enunciation of such an heretical gospel may sound in official ears.

The COMMISSION desire to make an appeal, in all kindness, but with equal earnestness, to the boys and young men who are fond and desirous of skating on the Pools of ELM PARK. Cannot they confine themselves to the surface of the Pools which are now extensive enough, and, shortly, will be greatly increased ? The glairy crust upon the shores may be tempting ; but, in



extreme cold weather, the branches and stems of shrubs are brittle as glass and break at as slight contact. It is discouraging to find the frozen ground strewn with broken twigs of the Ghent Azalea, covered all over with plump buds,—the sure promise of beauty and fragrance now, alas, recklessly spoiled. Broken limbs of rare Evergreens,—scarcely to be found outside of the Arnold Arboretum, betray the mischief of some who were better at home—by the fireside of one who is said to find work for idle hands. If skating cannot be enjoyed without careless or wanton injury to the property of the City, it may become a serious question for the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS to decide, whether their duty to the trust confided in them does not require them to draw off the water and render skating impracticable! It is sincerely hoped that this word of simple caution may prove sufficient. The hearty co-operation of all well-meaning lads might make it certain.

The COMMISSION are often favored with written advice,—some of it anonymous and therefore useful only in the water-closet—; some of it pertinent, and part the other kind; but all suggesting the doing of this, that, and the other, with but slight regard to the fitness of things, and with none at all for the amount of their appropriation. They pay what heed they can, and according to merit as it presents itself to them. For, after all, they must be the final judges whether it is not easier for a person to transfer his seat to a more shady place, than for the COMMISSION to keep moving the settees whenever the sun becomes oppressive! They think it better for a Band of Musicians to arise and stand while playing; not alone because it obviates any occasion for that chronic nuisance, a Band-Stand! but because it manifests a decent respect for the People,—their employers—who perforce must keep their feet throughout the whole performance. In all practicable ways would the COMMISSION promote the public enjoyment. They seek to introduce such plants and shrubs as may afford delight from beauty or fragrance; they have been enabled to furnish instrumental music through the kind co-operation of the Military Committee of the City Council; and they

have endeavored, with imperfect success, to encourage boating upon the Pools, without subjecting the City to the expense of building up a navy of its own. The grandeur of Boston and the artificial beauties of its Public Garden are often held up to the COMMISSION by lovers of the far-fetched and dear-bought. Here, in the country, are no hundreds of political laborers, tumbling over each other's wheelbarrows and jostling each other in the lazy crowd: nor tens of thousands of dollars wherewith to heat glass by the acre; or copy, at a melancholy distance, the delusion and frenzy of the Tulipomania. But the eyes of the COMMISSION are open and they do not overlook aught that may be of possible achievement here, even should the credit of its initiation have to be awarded to the City by the Charles. One "*Notion*," fully set forth in the note at the foot of this page,\* has at least the merit of fecundity to recommend it; something to be considered in these days of degeneracy when the Yankee is reproached with not doing his part. Should the experiment in the metropolis prove a trump, the Heart of the Commonwealth will not be slow to follow suit.

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\* "THE PUBLIC GARDEN AND CIVIC ECONOMY.

REMARKABLE SPEECH BY A MEMBER OF THE BOSTON COMMON COUNCIL.

During one of the meetings of the Boston common council under the Palmer administration the representative of a portion of one of the North end wards arose and was recognized by the president as Mr. O'Day. 'Mr. President,' began Mr. O'Day, 'I have lately been thravelling in Europe, and during my peregrinations I visited the noble city of Vaanice, the queen, sir, av the Adriatic, the scene, Mr. President, of Shakespeare's noble production, "The Marchant of Vaanice," the remarkable city av dungeons and paalices. Sir, I was particularly shtruck wid some of the features of Vaanation life. I niver in me loife beheld anything like the gondolas av Vaanice. They are beautiful. Well, I thought, being a pathriotic Amerikin citizen, that I would give the binefits av me observations abroad to me native city on me rethurn, and I made a study of the gondolas for that purpose. Sir, after much consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the gondolas wud be a plsant feature in the Boston Public Gardens. The children wud be delighted wid 'em, and they are not dangerous at all, therefore, sir, I move you that twinty-five gondolas be imported to beautify and adorn our noble plsire resort.' Mr. O'Day sat down, upon which another member of the council arose. He was recognized by the president as Mr. O'Shay. 'Mr. President,' began Mr. O'Shay, 'I have listened wid great attintion to the very instructive and

The efforts of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, to secure a foot-hold, if no more, by Lake Quinsigamond, were never relaxed. The desire for some such open space prompted their instigation of the City Council to apply for a concession of Regatta Point,—as of a land-mark and area widely known throughout the Commonwealth for its fitness of application to those saner and sanitary uses from which it had been perverted. The very reasonable Petition of the City encountered a storm of opposition. Obsolete or fossil functionaries were drummed together, from all parts of the Commonwealth, to testify by how much per cent: the chances of ministering to a mind diseased would be reduced! were a road through the land of the State a mile distant, instead of a stone's throw,—as was always the case with Plantation *Street*. One learned Medi-cus, mindful of the story how potent the other Doctor was “on fits!” wrote out an elaborate thesis on the Gravel! whereto he opined there was a strong tendency in Worcester. The gravel was evidently his specialty; and perhaps such an unstable basis is adequate for a crazy trust.

However, the House Committee were not thoroughly “possessed,” nor was their “reason taken captive.” The prayer of the Petition became Law,—substantially as asked. Circumstances that have since occurred render the necessity for that territory less imperative (although it can never cease to be desirable); and which, as the grip upon the land is tenacious, will make it safe for the City to await a later and more propitious time, in the assurance that it will always have to deal with the Commonwealth.

It cannot be necessary, in this connection, to recite the corres-

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illigant remarks of me friend from the North end ward, and have been very much imprissed wid them. But, sir, while I am in favor of the gondolas, I cannot forgit that we are sint to this honorable chamber to look afther the interests av the citizens av this modern Athens, and to administer public affairs equinomically. I was sint here on an equinomical platform, and I have always been an advocate av retrinchment. Therefore, sir, to be consistent wid me past reputation, I move an amindmint to me friend's motion, namely, as follows, videlicet: That insthead av 25 gondolas we import for the public garden only two gondolas, a male and a female, and let nature take its course.’”

pondence and business interviews that preceded, and culminated in, that most liberal and unsolicited gift to the City, by *Mr.* Horace H. Bigelow, of a tract of land along and running far back from the Westerly shore of Lake Quinsigamond. The opinion of the writer, formed after an actual and close inspection of the tract in question, was declared at the time in the public press: and nothing remains to be added or qualified. The formal action of the City Government is upon record,—to stand as an ineffaceable memorial of an act of munificence than which none could have responded more closely to an existing popular demand.

In the Inaugural Address of *His Honor* Isaac Davis, A. D., 1861, may be found the subjoined passage,—alike comprehensive and pertinent to this whole subject-matter:

“Lake Quinsigamond is becoming a place of great resort for the inhabitants of our city for boating and bathing in summer and skating in winter. Individuals who resort to this beautiful lake for recreation and amusement are far more numerous than all who visit the new Common, which was purchased and improved at an expense of about \$13,500.\* Nowhere upon the shores of the lake is there any land belonging to the City, where the people can resort without being trespassers. I propose, as soon as I can procure the necessary surveys, to present to the city a tract of land bordering upon the lake, and also upon the railroad, for the purpose of a public Park, where our public schools and Sunday-schools may hold their picnics, where individuals or clubs can have their boat-houses, where skating parties can assemble, and where all the citizens can visit the lake and see and enjoy its beautiful scenery without being trespassers. Whenever this gift is made, I hope you will not have the least delicacy about rejecting it, if you are not fully satisfied that it will be beneficial to the city. One mode of adding to the wealth and prosperity of the city is to make it beautiful and attractive, so that men of science, wealth, genius and learning may select it as a place of residence.”

It needs not, did time and space allow, to explain why that generous proposition was never consummated. It is more than probable that the expenses of the War of Secession, then just beginning to be felt, operated as a check to every enterprise which lacked a martial aim and bearing. The maintenance of a Park by the Lake might well appall a frugal community whose

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\*Including the cost of a massive Fence which has now, A. D. 1885, disappeared from natural causes; and of the *Street*, whose location preceded and to some extent, determined that of PARK AVENUE. E. W. L.

wants had been few, who had not then acquired an appetite for sewers, and who appeared to grudge themselves any pleasurable indulgence in this life. Hereafter,—in another world,—shall they regain their paradise! “a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.” For the present, let the tax-gatherer suffice, super-added to whom shall be a Collector of Internal Revenue! whose mercy endureth forever. Clearly,—it was then no time for Parks; but rather for imprecations on our enemies and—? passing the contribution-box.

But there came a good time for Parks when it occurred to *Hon.* Edward L. Davis, A. D. 1884, that the stone which the builders rejected became thereafter the head of the corner. It did not follow that men now would look a gift-horse in the mouth because their fathers were perhaps needlessly inquisitive. Taking counsel only from his own liberal impulses he presented himself still upright beneath the heavy burden of his generosity to his native city. Shall it be said again?

“Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.”

Perish the false idea! and may their disinterested tribe multiply, as do the mill-owners diminish the waters of the Lake! Faster,—they cannot.

The gift of *Mr.* Davis supplies what, without it, would have been grievously missed;—a fitting proportion and symmetry to the new LAKE PARK. The separate tracts of land comprised in the estate of his kinsfolk, and included in his supplemental Deed of Gift, would have been found absolutely indispensable to the enjoyment or improvement of the territory. The South-West-erly portion of the Park, where it is rounded off by the tracks of the Boston & Albany Railway, is richly furnished with a strong growth of clean, healthy trees, and curiously adorned by immense boulders compared to which that upon ELM PARK is but a child's marble. The whole extensive area is rough and, to the inexperienced eye must present very discouraging, if not even repulsive, features. But natural beauty is there, if latent; and the promise is that those who seek shall find. But still much is plainly obvious;—a palpable loveliness of landscape

that, whether for variety, or sharp perspective outline, may challenge rivalry, far and near. Yet what need to consume pages in description, when the people can see and judge for themselves !

The generous gift in money wherewith *Mr.* Davis so aptly and usefully crowned his benefaction, will prove of incalculable service. The whole transaction ; from its early initiation by *Mr.* Bigelow to its ultimate munificent completion by *Mr.* Davis ; is one in which all the parties to it may well feel a just pride ; and upon which the People of Worcester can felicitate themselves, more and more, until the Lake shall be entirely exhausted by mill-wheels.

Until that day—*dies infausta, infelix!* it is our duty, to whom the talent has been committed, to put it to its best use. To see that it is made to promote popular enjoyment ; to develop a taste for the beauties of nature ; and to refine and soften, by cultivating, humanity itself. All this will exact devotion, patience, —some expenditure, not necessarily lavish. The COMMISSION can do somewhat ; the City Government may achieve its share. But, after all, the chief responsibility for the future of this and all Public Grounds, as of everything affecting or connected with the municipality, will remain with the body of the people. A stream will not rise higher than its fountain.

An official note from our most courteous and excellent City Treasurer supplies a statement, herewith furnished, of the actual condition, upon the 30th day of November, A. D., 1884., of the Fund given by Hon. Edward L. Davis for the survey, demarkation, and improvement of LAKE PARK :

(Copy)

“ OFFICE OF THE CITY TREASURER.

Worcester, Mass., Dec. 20, 1884.

TO EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN, ESQ.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS.

*Sir :*

The undersigned, as Treasurer, *ex-officio*, of the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) given to the City of Worcester by Hon. Edward L. Davis, as by his letter of June 26, 1884, addressed to the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and Common Council, will more fully appear, presents herewith, for the information of the Commission, under whose direction said sum of money is to be

expended, a brief statement of receipts and payments, on account of said donation, together with the balance carried forward at the close of the financial year, ending November 30, 1884.

Amount received, July 1, 1884,	\$5,000 00
Receipts to Nov. 30, 1884, viz :	
Interest on Bank Deposits,	50 55
Total,	<u>\$5,050 55</u>
Payments to Nov. 30, 1884, viz :	
Sundry bills for surveying,	\$48 30
Balance, Nov. 30, 1882, viz :	
Deposits in Bank,	5,002 25
Total,	<u>\$5,050 55</u>

Respectfully submitted.

WM. SUMNER BARTON,

*Treasurer."*

This relates solely to the last municipal year and is brought down to its close. A considerable sum has been expended since that date, for setting monuments, further surveys, the preparation of a topographical map of the whole territory comprised within the Park, as well as for downright labor in some tentative work of grubbing and grading.

In mid-Summer last, when if ever the subject matter might seem to require no special advocacy, a petition was presented to the City Council, in purport to wit:—

“ WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL:

The undersigned would respectfully ask your Honorable Body to take and hold

NEWTON HILL

for the purposes of a Park and Reservoir, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of the General Court, approved May 23, A. D. 1884.

That Act was passed by the General Court, at the express solicitation of the City of Worcester, represented before the

Judiciary Committee of the House by *His Honor the Mayor* and the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. At the preliminary hearing before the Committee of the Senate, the *City Solicitor* appeared. The original action of the City Council was based upon a communication from the present writer, under date of January 22d., A. D. 1884., and published as a supplement to the last Annual Report of this Commission. The application of the City was sustained by a vigorous public sentiment, never more sensitive than now; which has always desired the acquisition of Parks and Play-Grounds; which expects to have them to pay for to the extent that such privilege is not reserved for posterity; and which never ceases to wonder and fret at the inertia of the municipality. But the Act was deliberately passed just as it was sought for; as similar Acts had been before, but to be suffered to lapse.\* And, as first above stated, a Petition

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\*[CHAPTER 263.]

## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOUR.

### AN ACT

To provide for Public Parks in the City of Worcester.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by authority of the same, as follows:—*

SECTION 1. The city of Worcester by its city council may at any time within one year after the passage of this act take and hold by purchase or otherwise for the purpose of public parks all or any part of the land in said city which is bounded northerly by Highland Street, easterly by Park Avenue and southerly and westerly by Pleasant Street, and also all or any part of the land in said city bounded southerly by land of the trustees of the Worcester lunatic hospital, easterly by Lake Quinsigamond, northerly by Lincoln Street and westerly by Lake Avenue, as located by decree of the said city council dated September twenty-second, eighteen hundred and seventy-three and with the right to appropriate a portion of the land first described to be used as a reservoir.

SECTION 2. Said city, within sixty days after said city council votes to take any land under said act, shall file in the registry of deeds situate in the city of Worcester a description of the land taken sufficiently accurate for identification, which description shall be signed by the mayor of said city, and the title of the land taken shall vest in the said city from the time of filing such description.



asked the City Council to make use of the power thus granted. As much account is made of the character of signatures to a Petition; and properly enough, if the subscribers understand the full bearing and scope of the text; and as other Petitions have since been presented to the City Council, inconsiderate compliance with which would inevitably jostle this one side, if not defeat it entirely; the roll of signatures is published in full, as of people in every condition in life, and who were particularly cautioned not to attach their names unless they fully approved the entire text and bearing of the Petition. They desire the use and enjoyment of Parks for all time,—and at once! They would get them now, while the land is vacant and cheap; letting other things that we can get along without wait until the necessity for them makes them indispensable:

## PETITION.

“The undersigned would respectfully ask your honorable body to take and hold Newton Hill for the purposes of a park and reservoir, in accordance with the provisions of the act of the general court approved May 28, A. D. 1884.

Stephen Salisbury,	Henry Woodward,	H. M. Rice,
Jonas G. Clark,	Geo. E. Merrill,	H. R. Williamson,
David Whitcomb,	Geo. Sumner,	Wesley Davis,
Edward L. Davis,	Otis E. Putnam,	G. A. Kimball,

SECTION 3. The city of Worcester shall pay all damages sustained by any person or corporation by the taking of any land under this act, and if the owner of any land taken shall not agree with said city upon the damages to be paid therefor, such damages shall be assessed and determined in the manner provided where land is taken for laying out of highways.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, May 15, 1884.

Passed to be enacted.

GEO. A. MARDEN, Speaker.

IN SENATE, May 19, 1884.

Passed to be enacted.

GEO. A. BRUCE, President,

MAY 28, 1884.

Approved.

GEO. D. ROBINSON.

SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT, BOSTON, June 2, 1884.

A true copy.

Witness the Seal of the Commonwealth.

[SEAL.]

HENRY B. PEIRCE,  
Secretary of the Commonwealth.

P. C. Bacon,  
 E. A. Goodnow,  
 W. W. Rice,  
 Adin Thayer,  
 E. B. Stoddard,  
 A. G. Bullock,  
 Thomas A. Clark,  
 Wm. F. Collier,  
 Edwin T. Marble,  
 Philip W. Moen,  
 Henry W. Miller,  
 W. H. Goulding,  
 Edward W. Ball,  
 Samuel Winslow,  
 D. S. Messinger,  
 M. B. Green,  
 A. C. Munroe,  
 E. Cutler,  
 S. A. Maynard,  
 E. M. Barton,  
 E. W. Vaill,  
 Aug. N. Currier,  
 H. C. Rice,  
 Warren Williams,  
 Calvin Foster,  
 Samuel Woodward,  
 Wm. H. Jourdan,  
 F. H. Kinnicutt,  
 Stephen Salisbury, Jr.,  
 G. Henry Whitcomb,  
 R. James Tatman,  
 L. J. White,  
 C. F. Washburn,  
 G. H. Kendall,  
 Wm. K. Crosby,  
 J. Q. Adams,  
 Charles Wilder,  
 Joseph E. Davis,  
 A. H. Hammond,  
 Joseph Sargent,  
 Wm. T. Merrifield,  
 N. T. Bemis,  
 Jerome Marble,  
 D. O. Mears,  
 N. A. Lombard,  
 Geo. F. Hewett,  
 G. C. Bigelow,  
 Joseph A. Howland,

Geo. E. Fairbanks,  
 Francis B. Rice,  
 Charles E. Brooks,  
 Jesse Moore,  
 B. W. Potter,  
 Charles E. Black,  
 Henry J. Howland,  
 Chas. B. Whiting,  
 N. S. Liscomb,  
 J. B. Watson,  
 Geo. L. Newton,  
 W. Ansel Washburn,  
 T. R. Norcross,  
 E. E. Fiske,  
 S. A. Pratt,  
 I. N. Metcalf,  
 O. B. Hadwen,  
 F. B. Knowles,  
 C. M. Miles,  
 F. B. Kendall,  
 Geo. H. Clark,  
 Geo. L. Bliss,  
 S. J. Wilcox,  
 Geo. E. Ham,  
 D. G. Tapley,  
 L. A. Wood,  
 John C. Otis,  
 Jas. W. Welch,  
 E. D. Cheney,  
 A. B. Lovell,  
 J. W. Jordan,  
 Samuel Mawhinney,  
 Merrick Bemis,  
 Josiah Pickett,  
 James Green,  
 Alex. Bigelow,  
 G. H. Estabrook,  
 H. P. Duncan,  
 J. H. Dodd,  
 Henry Bacon,  
 Frank W. Wheeler,  
 H. C. Rawson,  
 Asa L. Kneeland,  
 Isaac D. White, Jr.,  
 W. B. Chamberlain,  
 B. Frank Lee,  
 Asa Nourse,  
 Thomas H. Gage,

O. P. Shattuck,  
 J. H. Rollins,  
 Thomas H. Dodge,  
 Henry Griffin,  
 Thomas Talbot,  
 Alex. Marsh,  
 George E. Francis,  
 F. A. Clapp,  
 Henry S. Pratt,  
 Henry M. Clemence,  
 G. L. D. Newton,  
 P. D. Towne,  
 Thomas J. Hastings,  
 Jared Whitman,  
 Samuel Porter,  
 W. H. Willard,  
 M. S. Ballord,  
 G. W. Elkins,  
 J. Alvin Farley,  
 David Manning,  
 P. Hunt,  
 S. R. Leland,  
 John Jay Putnam,  
 Stephen Sawyer,  
 I. S. Gordon,  
 Chas. A. Lincoln,  
 E. Boyden,  
 Wm. G. Strong,  
 Henry G. Taft,  
 Edward F. Bisco,  
 C. M. Dyer,  
 Edward W. Lincoln,  
 Wm. A. Richardson,  
 J. H. Bigelow,  
 John R. Hill,  
 A. F. Burbank,  
 Albert Wood,  
 Joseph E. Fales,  
 R. R. Shepard,  
 Oramel Martin,  
 George T. Rice,  
 James F. Allen,  
 Chas. E. Stevens,  
 Edward R. Fiske,  
 Chas. H. Peck,  
 Chas. B. Damon,  
 C. G. Parker,  
 H. J. Jennings,

Edwin Eldred,	Wm. W. Johnson,	E. Warner,
Sumner Pratt,	John B. Devereaux,	Charles A. Chase,
Fred. S. Pratt,	W. A. Williams,	S. B. Winchester,
Edw. I. Comins,	John B. Goodell,	C. H. Benchley,
George W. Gale,	J. A. Clemence,	Frank S. Stone,
Lyman Drury,	Jere. Winn,	Andrew Stone,
Samuel R. Heywood,	E. S. Knowles,	Lucy A. Stone,
C. M. Bent,	C. B. Robbins,	Henry H. Houghton,
H. A. Marsh,	E. B. Crane,	James P. Hall,
E. F. Bisco,	D. H. Eames,	Geo. W. Harlow,
Chas. B. Pratt,	O. T. Crawford,	Geo. A. Pearson,
Francis H. Dewey,	John S. Baldwin,	E. P. Howe,
W. C. Munger,	W. G. Maynard,	R. H. Southgate,
H. Goddard,	Albert Tolman,	Chas. F. Pierce,
A. D. Hubbard,	Geo. A. Bates,	C. L. Gorham,
S. M. Richardson,	R. F. Upham,	John D. Washburn,
L. B. Witherby,	S. Penniman,	D. C. Tourtellot,
Geo. T. Witherby,	Geo. E. Batchelder,	Charles L. Redding,
Daniel S. Burgess,	Chas. S. Childs,	Jonas White,
Priestley Young,	A. G. Walker,	W. Mecorney,
David Manning, Jr.,	Phillip L. Moen,	John A. Dana,
Geo. H. Mills,	Harvey B. Wilder,	Geo. H. Gould,
J. Fred Mason,	A. L. Burbank,	Geo. W. Phillips,
C. B. Metcalf,	Frederick G. Stiles,	Samuel D. Nye,
R. Woodward,	J. E. Estabrook,	Charles C. Baldwin.

That Petition was referred by the City Council to a Committee, which proceeded to amuse itself in dreary negotiations with the proprietors of the Hill,—the admitted impossibility of agreeing with whom upon any reasonable terms was the avowed reason for applying to the Legislature for an enabling Act. The Committee would fain *buy* and *hold*. But the Act authorizing the City to do so had expired; and, because of its conceded futility, the General Court passed the new Act empowering Worcester to “*Take and Hold!*” The Committee were aiming to accomplish something for which they had, if warrant of Law, not even a remote expectation of success!

What better is this than boy’s play?

The petitioners,—clear-headed, responsible men,—ask the City Council to “take and hold” NEWTON HILL. It was no act of silly gush,—on their part,—no impulse of sympathetic

emotion. When *Hon.* Stephen Salisbury (since gone to his rest!) was solicited to head the petition with his influential name, he replied that he had not reflected upon the subject and would prefer to take time. The next forenoon, he returned the paper to the writer, saying that he had concluded it to be his duty to sign it and that he took pleasure in so doing. Others were equally earnest and sincere. Of course it is within the discretion of the *Honorable* CITY COUNCIL to waive, or absolutely decline, the opportunity. But the Petitioners have asked only for what they want—an addition to one of our Parks, desirable alike from propinquity and its unique character;—which once acquired is obtained forever. They are not afraid to trust a Worcester County Jury, to determine, if needs must, what may be the value per acre of a disused or half-starved cow-pasture! Having faith that the new PARKS-COMMISSION will make suitable provision for the wants of the City, in like respects,—both Northwardly and Southwardly,—they cannot see why the City Council should not, in a manly, straight-forward fashion, accede to their prayer. The writer has urged this measure, for years, as one of high public policy. Perhaps, at times, he may have appeared unreasonable, or importunate. But it has ever commended itself to him as vital to the future, proper development of the City; and, with this final appeal, he takes leave of the subject, as its advocate, forever.

The visions of the *Seer*,—son of Levi,—like the Sibylline Books, increase in value as their realization, or time, diminish their number. He has beheld in the dim distance, the WATER-PARK of Worcester, which is not by any means a Park by the Water, being the Lake itself! no longer drawn down at the sweet will of manufacturers, who have learned that a motive power is valueless in proportion as it ceases to be certain; no longer obstructed by a solid causeway, which has yielded place to a succession of Arches over which travel finds no impediment, and through which the pleasure, or racing, boat, gains easy transit. He looks further: and sees the procession of vehicles and pedestrians, by the North-West shore of Quinsigamond, as

they wind around Wigwam\* and pass along the broad Avenue to which stolid lunacy does not oppose a barrier, or priggish exclusiveness—its first cousin—offer futile objections. The hill-sides are dotted with pleasant cottages,—the smiling homes of a population no more content to ferment and seethe in the dust and grime of Pine Meadow; but willing, even anxious to secure the blessings of pure air and cheerful surroundings for their children, if too late for themselves. LAKE PARK has been cleared up and developed; its countless possibilities realized, so that happy parties are in the constant enjoyment of its native beauties. Wide views from lofty acclivities, lovely vistas through forest openings, sparkling streams and chance waterfalls, with white, crisp towns in the blue haze upon yonder hills! While beneath our feet lies here, there, and miles remote, the fair Lake,—the like to whose limpid mirror men cross broad Oceans to see, entitling them Katrine, Leman, or whatsoever name may offer as a synonym for our aboriginal Quinsigamond.

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\*LAKE AVENUE, northwardly, if of unvarying width, should be deflected to the inside of Wigwam, at a great saving of cost; and accelerating its construction by bringing it within the possible expenditure of the City. The COMMISSION always contemplate practicability. Their plan looked to no wild extravagance,—no visionary outlay. Utilize what is possible, so far as may be, and thereafter project for continuance, or extension, as you may desire. With LAKE AVENUE—South—transferred to the Bridle Path; and the Avenue itself opened northerly to the base of Wigwam; why not diverge to the Westward, meeting Faith Avenue as it swings down from Burncoat, to Lincoln Street, on an easy curve?

Would any one know, at a glance, just how it will disfigure that shapely Hill, to make a sheer cut from its Eastern side for the sake of constructing a road-way, by dumping into the Lake;—let him but look at the slope of NEWTON HILL, by the Spurr\* Boulder, which neither sword nor naught else has over-grown since the original excavation thirty years ago! With the rest of LAKE AVENUE re-located, and constructed, as it should be, the wayfarer will hail with joy the diversion which offers him a stretch of inland scenery after four miles by the very Lake side. And Wigwam, in the hospitable occupation of the Natural History Society, will accord a genial welcome to its guests without compelling the City to waste the substance of the People in marring its symmetry.

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\*Named for the late George E. Spurr, who, as Chairman of the Highway Committee, at the request of the writer, took precautions to save that huge rock from the drills and powder of his vandals.

Off—towards the West, over the South *Ledge*, and through Quinsigamond *Village* around the foot of *Mount St. James*, the wide AVENUE so often advised and commended, is at length opened for travel and traffic; and the throngs that are now visible upon it direct their steps to the new Play-Ground secured for the Southern section of the City by the PARKS-COMMISSION, to witness the sports of the youthful athletes. Supplying facilities for exercise in the open air, which are heartily enjoyed and thoroughly appreciated, the wonder augments that the People were content to await the tardy boon with so much patience. Not so extensive a tract as might be wished, it is as large as could be secured in a manufacturing centre without an absolute arrest of business enterprise. It is occupied and used for a Play-Ground, as it was meant to be; for a monotony of Gardens or Parks can become as tiresome and pall upon the taste as soon as anything else that lacks variety.

And now, getting around by PARK AVENUE, the *Seer* looks down from NEWTON HILL,—at last securely in municipal ownership,—upon the old territory of the Agricultural Society, covered with substantial residences instead of empty cattle-sheds. It has ceased to be a deserted waste for three-fourths of the year, not even ministering to the uses for which it was first acquired, and for which its rise in value long since rendered it inappropriate. But, reduced to settlement, its taxable returns furnish a perceptible and welcome entry in the civic income; while the revenue from its sale has enabled the Society to procure a more suitable location elsewhere. And with it have fled its attendant nuisances,—the fungus growth of a populous City,—a continuous offence to the neighborhood until they are either expelled from the system or sloughed off.

Continuing on along PARK AVENUE, and following West Boylston *Street* to where the irons of two Railways intersect it; the gaze of the *Seer* is arrested by the newer and permanent location of the Agricultural Society. FAITH AVENUE reaches over,—connecting Lincoln with West Boylston, *Street*, surmounting the ridge by an easy grade, and uniting two contiguous portions of the City that were too long sundered. Accessible

by broad roads or smooth railways; with an ample area for every use that exacts a level surface; and with an unfailing supply of water; was it not a wise measure of policy to remove thither when the price set upon land was reasonable?

And the *Seer* progresses Eastward, over FAITH AVENUE, and, coming down Lincoln *Street*, invades Paine Woods. To his inquiry what may be the meaning of this festive pic-nic of grown people, with prattling children, all happy as larks,—the reply from a dozen eager tongues is, that the City came at last to perceive that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; that it is not all of life to live; that the municipal body, if it builds over its territory closely, must provide occasional openings to the Sun and Air: and that, if the men of old dedicated the COMMON and ELM PARK to popular use and enjoyment, their successors of this day and generation but bury their talent in a napkin who do not provide in abundant, aye lavish measure, for wants that grow more importunate and inexorable as population becomes crowded to the point of oppression,—almost suffocation.

And, as the *Seer* closes his eyes wearied by their protracted insight, his ears are saluted with the clatter and rumble of cars upon the Street Railway, as they descend from Burncoat to Barber's Crossing and pass swiftly along their route through Grove *Street*; by the Rural Cemetery and the Wire Mill, to the heart of the City.

“*Finis coronat opus!*”—May the good work be accelerated!

All which is Respectfully submitted,

by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Massachusetts, January 26, A. D. 1885.*

## APPENDIX.

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The arrogant encroachments upon what has always been regarded as private right; followed up by equally high-handed usurpation of the public easement; in every instance by that creation of the popular will and tolerance—the Corporation;—heretofore noticed in these Reports; bid fair to meet with an adequate check. A paragraph in *Bradstreet's*, of March 29, 1884, makes the following record:—

“The question whether the erection of telegraph poles and apparatus upon a public highway, the fee of which is in a private person (though burdened with the public easement), creates a separate and additional burden, requiring an independent assessment of damages, for which the owner was not compensated when the highway was laid out, and whether the omission to provide compensation in an act authorizing the erection of such poles rendered it unconstitutional, has recently been considered by the Supreme Courts of Massachusetts and of Illinois. The Massachusetts court, in the lately decided case of *Pierce vs. Drew*, held that the use of a portion of the highway for the poles, etc., of companies formed under the law of the State for the transmission of intelligence by electricity and subject to the supervision of the local municipal authorities, which has been permitted by the legislature, is a public use similar to that for which the highway was originally taken or to which it was originally devoted, and that the owner of the fee is entitled to no further compensation. A different conclusion was reached by the Supreme Court of Illinois in the recent case of *The Board of Trade Telegraph Company vs. Barnett*. In this case, the facts in which were similar to those in the Massachusetts case, the court held that the construction and maintenance of a telegraph line upon the highway was a new and additional burden upon the fee, to which it was not contemplated that it should be subjected, and for which the owner was entitled to additional compensation, and that any act not providing such compensation must be regarded as infringing the constitutional principle that ‘private property shall not be taken or damaged without just compensation.’”

What is law in Illinois, as above stated, is affirmed as law in the imperial State of New York by its Court of Appeals. When will the rights of individuals ever obtain recognition from the Judiciary of Massachusetts!

E. W. L.



*With sincere regard to  
Edward W. Lincoln.*

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION

OF

PUBLIC GROUNDS,

AND

PARKS-COMMISSION,

OF THE

CITY OF WORCESTER,

FOR THE

1884-YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1885.

WORCESTER:  
PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON,  
311 MAIN STREET.  
1886.

13-11-16

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*To the Honorable City Council :*

In Section 4, Chapter 163, of the acts of the General Court, A. D. 1885, it is declared that :—

“The Annual Report provided for in the Twelfth Section of Chapter One Hundred and Fifty-four of the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-two, and in the Twenty-first Section of Chapter Five Hundred and Ninety-nine of the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-six, shall be made in the month of March.”

The old COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS continued in existence until May 1st, A. D. 1885, from which date the new PARKS-COMMISSION assumed the functions of both bodies. The responsibilities of the fiscal as well as of the official year, were divided between them in almost equal measures, and, as the later Commission is the supplement, as it were, and has become the legal successor of the other, there appears no sufficient reason why a consolidated report may not answer every requirement of custom or the Statute. Such is herewith submitted,—it being premised that the financial statement of the Commissions covers the municipal year that terminates on the 30th November ultimo, and the

“account of their acts and doings” is brought down to the date of the report:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS AND PARKS-COMMISSION,

In account with CITY OF WORCESTER.

*Dr.*

By Annual Appropriation,	\$7,000 00
Revenue,	2 10
	<hr/>
	\$7,002 10

*Per Contra, Cr.*

Human labor, regular employment,	\$2,902 81
Hire of teams, with men, extra,	875 17
Shade-trees and plants,	1,016 52
Loam and manure,	392 00
Seeds,—grass, flower, etc.,	36 00
Printing reports, etc.,	60 02
Books, stationery and stamps,	24 11
Tools, repairs of same, hardware, etc.,	244 87
Lumber for tree-guards, and carpentry,	540 42
Stone for wall and stone steps,	57 26
Engineer's department, stakes for trees, etc.,	86 42
Repairs to settees,	55 00
Repairs to pump on Common,	11 89
Fuse and powder,	11 53
Plans of Elm Park,	52 00
Sewer boots (rubber),	10 00
Beach stone and paving,	255 24
Timothy F. Ryan (Deceased May 31), his estate, services,	39 60
New boat and transportation of boats,	43 50
Iron bridge and granite piers,	282 00
Permanent cases for wintering Cannas, and plants,	45 00
Lumber and building “Shelter” at Lake Park,	425 00
Express charges,	7 20
Fence wire for plant and tree-guards,	13 56
Police badge,	1 50
Blacksmithing,	8 16
	<hr/>
	\$6,996 71

Saved and “sunk,”

\$5 32

PUBLIC GROUNDS.

5

"PARKS-COMMISSION,  
Worcester, Massachusetts,  
December 19, A. D. 1885.

TO HENRY GRIFFIN,  
Auditor.

Dear Sir :

In response to your oral request for an estimate, by this COMMISSION, of the sum that will be needed for its legitimate work, during the ensuing municipal year, I have the honor to state that Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000.00) is absolutely required and ought to be cheerfully granted.

Of this amount \$4,860.40 is necessary to pay for the skilled manual labor indispensable to keep the COMMON and ELM PARK in the condition wherein the people expect and insist that they shall be maintained.

At least Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) have been required, heretofore, to set out *Shade-Trees*, guard them properly, and secure and keep up an adequate supply of young stock. Public opinion exacts more, rather than less, for the future. ARBOR-DAY cannot be denied.

The contingent remainder will scarcely suffice for the hire of teams, the purchase of manure or of plants and seeds, with nothing left applicable towards the development of LAKE PARK but the bare pittance that strict frugality may scrimp from an appropriation rigidly restricted at the outset.

I remain—very respectfully,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,  
*Chairman."*

"CITY OF WORCESTER,

In City Council, March 30, 1885.

*Ordered*:—That the necessary repairs to the Soldiers' Monument caused by the action of the elements upon the cement at the joints of the stones forming the foundation of the monument itself, be done under the direction of the Commission of Shade-Trees and Public Grounds. Estimated expense Fifty Dollars, and to be charged to the appropriation of Incidental Expenses.

*Approved,*

CHAS. G. REED, *Mayor."*

In compliance with the above vote of the *City Council* a contract was made with *Col.* David M. Woodward to do the work supposed to be requisite. That it was well done no one will need to be assured who knows him. That its cost exceeded the estimate may as well be told here as anywhere, since this COMMISSION insisted that nothing should be omitted that was essential, *Col.* Woodward was not the man to scrimp a job for personal gain, and the City decided that a just claim should be paid. But the original "order" recites the "action of the elements" as rendering repairs imperative. The elements may be held inno-

cent. The fault was in man,—greedy of his time, short-sighted for the future, looking only to prospective municipal elections. The real trouble was in the foundation (beneath the *pediment* mis-named in the “order”), hurried together to anticipate an arbitrary date, the stones not built up in a solid and symmetrical mass, but piled one on another as you would lay a wall between farm fields, yet with less than half the sound farm sense. That sub-structure would have been condemned as insufficient for a country out-house. Yet there it was deposited or dumped, as you may choose, on land filled in since the school-house was removed. Had it not been for the excavation to make room for the concrete walk around it, whereby that structural weakness was disclosed, and a chance that was improved given to remedy it so far as possible; the writer has no doubt that the entire monument would have been a ruin long since. It would not require very many blocks of stone, weighing (35) thirty-five tons each, superimposed, to crush through or spread apart an outer periphery of dry rubble, reinforced by a solitary pier of pinners in the hollow centre. A copious injection of broken stone and cement was employed to countervail the downward forces of gravitation; but whosoever would bring an indictment against the “elements,” in this connection, may understand that it was a lateral thrust the whole time.

The Pool at the southwest corner of *Elm Park*, whereof the commencement was recorded in the last published Report of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, was finished before the Vernal Equinox, A. D. 1885. It will now be possible, should it be thought wise, to establish a direct connection with the municipal system of sewerage. At present the water cannot be drawn down so as to admit of cleansing or repairs, of which, happily, neither have been found necessary, so far: and to effect which no attempt ever should be permitted, unless found to be indispensable. But the COMMISSION rely upon fish, vegetation, and motion, to preserve the purity of the water; knowing, by exact observation, that they can do so in a pond, perfectly; as they could in the Blackstone if suffered and let alone. In appearance, no less than for its intended purpose, that Pool more than answers expectation. Already it meets with general approval,



which is certain to be extended and strengthened when the shrubbery around its banks attains even partial development. The COMMISSION claim to be judged by the results of their work,—not by the misconception of those who gulp inferences and jump at conclusions. A ready writer, who heralds our local news on the first day of the week, was pleased to intimate, in a notice of the latest Report of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, that a particular reference might be toned with perhaps undue severity. But had he the slightest idea of the ceaseless verbal drizzle-drozzle wherewith that COMMISSION had been anonymously assailed for years? Did he know of the undiluted venom that inspired those notes to *Mayor* Reed and each one of the Thirty-two *Aldermen* and *Councilmen*, begging and beseeching them to interfere and stop “the silly business and pond-hole foolishness of the Commissioner.”

“Ibam forte Via Sacra, sicut meus est mos,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Accurrit quidam,”—

*Quidam* had not been consulted, forsooth! The work did not commend itself, in progress, to a mental inanity which had never dreamt of the latent possibilities in a landscape; and took it for granted that, if buried, the talent of developing them should repose in the same napkin. It is just such dead wood that the world is cursed withal. You can't burn it: you can't build with it. But some shiftless tramp, strolling that way, sees at once how it will serve his purpose of clogging motion, or hindering further progress, if thrown under the wheels. The attempt failed, in this instance, as it usually does; but none the less was it accompanied by the malicious action and the vile intent!

Was not, then, the *Chairman* right in his diagnosis of the case? Even now, what better can he do than to revive a quaint old tune to the accord of the subjoined lines:—

*Air*—“There was a Ram in Lincolnshire,” &c., &c.

There loafed a dude, nae sae lang syne, who used his lelsure time  
 To daub and smear the *Public Grounds* with his superfluous slime:  
 Writing to STODDARD, REED, *Ald.* Parker, likewise to all  
 The *Council*,—notes replete with falsehood, and with gall.  
 Come, and stop Lincoln! ere he digs another absurd pool,  
 And I am proved, what now I'm called,—Worcester's especial fool!  
 Lest water should submerge the land, and I become, alas  
 What he has term'd, and would fain brand, Elm Park's peculiar Ass!

The pretensions of certain writers for the newspapers to a knowledge of Forestry are sternly repelled by the *Chairman* of the PARKS-COMMISSION. Their affectation of familiarity with the genus *Castanea*, that has been a somewhat sickly feature, of late, when they would run a chaff-cutter in order to load a composing-stick, may deceive the elect, but fools no expert. Their acquaintance with trees is of the most superficial character, as they quickly betray by shouting "Ochestnut!" at each specimen they encounter—it matters not what. Possibly,—being early birds,—the worm misleads them; whether of the still, or that dieth not. For such cases there is no vermifuge. Just think of mistaking the wood from which a "gondola" was constructed for chestnut! when any child could tell at once that it must be Irish Blackthorn, and an inferior quality at that.

*Arbor-Day*, that happy conceit from Nebraska, found ready acceptance in Massachusetts; to whose second city the planting of Shade-Trees along the Highways, and in the Public Grounds, had been an official and legal duty since A. D. 1863. It was never very difficult to get the work done in the central district. But, to the farmer standing in his orchard or looking around upon the Pines and Chestnuts that encompass his broad acres, it appeared almost a task of supererogation. Had it not been for the advent of the Grange, such doubt or inertia might have paralyzed effort to this day. But that timely organization; whatever faults it may have in the eyes of some who, not pervaded by its spirit, cannot appreciate its aims; has been productive of unmixed good, so far as concerns the landscape. Advocating clean and tasteful surroundings to all homes, it could but accord a glad welcome to the proposal of setting apart a day on which Arboriculture should be dignified both by practice and precept.

Could the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS refuse coöperation, when it was asked? The object was, in every way, commendable; and it looked as though one of the chief purposes, for which the *Commission* had been originally created, might easily receive a decided and wholly beneficial impulse. Thus persuaded, there was no hesitation in extending to the local Grange assur-

ances of all the aid within the power of the COMMISSION. Upon the appointed day, well-nigh a thousand thrifty trees were distributed, upon the requisition of the Grange officers, of which almost the entire number was allotted to the remoter suburbs. The season chanced to be quite propitious for planting, and, so far as the personal observation of the *Chairman* extends, those trees are mostly alive. But the abutters should care for them until they get well established, cutting off superfluous suckers, whether from root or branch, and bending the twig as the tree should incline. In the stock thus apportioned were eight hundred and seventy-nine Norway Maples, purchased at a nominal price some six or seven years previous; which the *Chairman* had pruned with his own hand for years, and whereof he is not quite sure, now that none are left, that he was not too lavish. Another lot has been obtained and set out in nursery rows; but years must elapse before they will be fit for permanent use. Yet, if they can but count with confidence upon the coöperation of their fellow-citizens, the COMMISSION will contrive that their stock of oil shall suffice, in future, for all probable lamps.

The Grange was so tickled with what it did, or rather expected to do (for it anticipated somewhat), that it spread its board and, going out into the highways, "compelled them to come in." Among other apologies was the following, which is inserted here for record; and because it is part of the final gospel of Arboriculture preached by the late COMMISSION OF SHADE-TREES: a gospel as to which there cannot be too earnest insistence, and yet one on which it is not always convenient to prepare a fresh sermon:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Mass., April 30, A. D. 1885.

*Gentlemen:—*

The courteous invitation of the "Worcester Grange, Patrons of Husbandry," asking the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS to "coöperate on the evening of Thursday, April 30, in a reunion of its members and others who have participated in the first public observance in this vicinity of ARBOR-DAY," was duly received. I regret my incapacity to attend. But a man must have ears to hear, when he is solicited to lay an offering upon the altar of the great American God—*Gab*,—were it only to catch the cue! Or if, remaining dumb himself, he would fitly appreciate that devout worship by others.

More than forty (40) years ago, it was my fortune to be riding upon a stage-coach through Morgan County, Illinois. That County might then, as now, well be named in the same day, and in no inferior comparison, with our own Worcester. After a while, the improved appearance of the farms by the roadside; the increasing excellence of the roads; the well-built and symmetrical walls abutting upon and restricting the highways, wherever there was sufficient stone; and, more than all else, superb rows of healthy and thriving Shade-Trees; combined to attract and rivet the gaze of the roving Yankee who, theretofore, had nowhere beheld the like. The impression made upon my mind, young as I was then, by that first sight of the approaches to Jacksonville, was never lost; and is vivid to this day. I have since beheld the later work of Rice, and the Hartshorns; of the Hadwens, and Hapgood—not forgetting some noteworthy achievement as you emerge from the bush between Old Boylston and its western off-shoot. It has been said that “the evil that men do lives after them.” But does not Arboriculture afford a clear demonstration of the survival of the fittest?

The Olympian Zeus found his congenial home among the oaks of Dodona. The groves of Britain sheltered the Druidical worship as it fled, affrighted, before the Roman legions. Ancient Germany rallied, with Arminius, under the arches of the Black Forest, in whose umbrageous aisles individual liberty preened itself for the sustained flight that has endured to our own day. Not until Lebanon had been stripped of its cedars, did the glory fade away from the City of God! Manhood and Godhood! personal freedom and national development, alike trace their origin to the primeval forests, in whose dim recesses their infancy was nourished, and in whose falling foliage should be murmured their dying requiem.

\* \* \* \* \*

Individually, and for this COMMISSION whose official life is almost closed, I congratulate the Grange, and its associates in the work, upon the auspicious inauguration of ARBOR-DAY here in our own Massachusetts. “It is but the first step that costs.” Your future efforts will be animated by the prestige of this present achievement; and will be rendered easier by memories of past success. Weary not in well-doing, from year to year! but let the beneficent influence emanate from the Heart of the Commonwealth, until its vivifying current shall inspire and bless, not the Grange alone, but as well our common humanity.

Believe me, most sincerely,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

To

JAMES DRAPER,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
A. A. HIXON,		
N. F. PERRY,		
H. J. ALLEN,		
E. SPRAGUE,		

People ask and obtain Shade-Trees from this COMMISSION, or assume the cost of securing them, individually, without troubling

themselves to reflect upon their future fate. So long as they get planted, what else remains? They have seen them set out in a hole in the ground, in good soil they are sure. So they go to work and get up a petition to the *City Council* for kerb-stone and gutter, with the inevitable foot-walk that, likely or not, they will insist must be "concrete." This Commission has hitherto vainly protested against what it deemed a violation of good taste and sound judgment. Possibly the impartial testimony of witnesses from beyond the ocean may gain better audience. Says the *Gardeners' Chronicle* (Eng.), under the caption, "*Street Trees and Asphalte*": "The Berlin municipal authorities, says the *Illustration Horticole*, have condemned the use of asphalted foot-paths in the city, by reason of the injury to the trees, the roots of which are deprived of air owing to the impermeability of the asphalte."

At a later date, the *Chronicle* returns to the charge under the head of "*Street Trees*," and writing of the admiration excited by the long lines of *Acacia*,—"notoriously a loose, straggling-looking tree when left to its own devices, but which, hard-pruned every year, have developed, in this instance, during each succeeding summer handsome, indeed we may say elegant, heads of foliage, dense, rich-green and beautiful. Hitherto, the Sutton Court-road paths have been of gravel, through which the water could percolate freely. The Local Board have now got possession of the road, and their first proceeding has been to kerb and channel the sides with stone. Then they have covered the paths with asphalte, thus excluding from the roots of the unfortunate *Acacias*, henceforth and forever, all moisture and air; and, finally, they are macadamizing the road, so that every drop of rain which falls upon it shall pass into the stone channels (gutters?) and thence into the drains, to be carried where it is not wanted—into the Thames. How true it is, that if God gives us the country, man—and too often very stupid man—makes the town."

That there must be foot-paths in a thickly settled community cannot be questioned. But there always exists a choice in the materials wherefrom they can be constructed,—nor is it ever

indispensable that they should be impervious to water. A porous walk is far more comfortable to the feet than any other. Nothing surpasses the ash from anthracite after the snow and rain of winter have once worked a thorough leach. But here in Worcester, doubtless, the Miss Nancy of Sanitation would object to their being utilized so cheaply or sensibly. Brick, stone, or "concrete": "you pays your money, and has"? no voice in the selection; certainly, no alternative.

Early in January, A. D. 1886, an old elm, near the centre of the Common, was prostrated by a sharp, sudden gust of wind. It was snapped short off, a few feet from the ground, happily falling where it could do the least injury. Had its direction been precisely opposite, nothing but a miracle could have saved the Bigelow Monument from being literally pulverized. As it chanced, not even a moment's interruption to their daily walk resulted to any one. But the actual condition of that tree furnished a lesson to this COMMISSION. Heart and sap-wood had alike lost fibre and, where not actually degenerated to punk, were so nearly decayed that the only wonder remaining was how the tree continued upright. It became obvious enough that those old giants in front of Brinley Block, upon which the *Chairman* daily cast a look of distrust and suspicion, ought not longer to be tolerated. They had grown aged in the public service, bestowing grateful shade upon one generation after another, and for that it was only just that they should be spared as long as possible. But the exactions of travel and traffic had exhausted their vitality; excavations for gutter, side-walks, and finally coal-vaults, compelling the excision of their roots, which in time was speedily followed by a corresponding mortality of limbs. The teeth of the crib-biter had left their impression, also canker and blight entering where the shield of bark was first gnawed off. Fault has been found by a few who were ignorant of the facts, and who naturally deplored the loss of what were once the greatest ornaments to our noble Main Street. But the responsibility rested lightly with them, bearing in oppressive weight upon the PARKS COMMISSION. What had occurred in Plymouth was liable to happen any day in Worcester. A gust of wind more violent than usual,—

a woman's piercing scream,—and all is over ! Not yet :—disputed liability, consequent ill-feeling diffusing itself almost imperceptibly throughout the community, lawsuits, judgments and—the inevitable taxation ! If not in Plymouth,—most assuredly in Worcester. For here, the trees had been officially and publicly declared unsafe, and the delay of each day in their removal by so much aggravated the danger and its consequent liability. The PARKS-COMMISSION object to anybody being killed through their neglect or indifference ; and, apprehending peril, made effective arrangements with the Highway Department to remove the more imminent causes of fear. A. D. 1870, the COMMISSION OF SHADE TREES AND PUBLIC GROUNDS expressed views to which its members, of whom all survive to this day, still adhere :—

“The felling of that ancient tree\* at the foot of Elm Street, which had sheltered so many generations beneath its protecting branches, afforded an occasion at the time for much sentimental reproach. A little reflection would have disclosed the fact that there were those upon that Commission to whom the least twig of that venerable tree was fraught with tenderer memories than the entire ruck of indiscriminate censors could possibly appreciate. Permission for its eradication was given, upon the application of the Highway Commissioner, with the advice and approval of the late Mayor †. The Commissioners are thoroughly satisfied with the result of an act, the responsibility for which is exclusively their own. And they felicitate the community upon the marked improvements which have followed, and which were rendered possible of accomplishment only by such decided action. Trees were made for man, not man for trees. Yet too many still stand, spared because of lingering associations, or on account of their age and massive proportions, whose removal would be a great public accommodation and appease an increasing popular demand.”

The PARKS-COMMISSION would keep themselves prepared for what is inevitable, precipitating nothing, in nowise forcing matters, but ever conscious and ready to admit that change, if at times insensible, is nevertheless an inexorable law of creation. A tree, like everything in the animal or vegetable economy, can but fulfil its appointed mission. It springs up, endures and decays. It was declared in Judæa almost nineteen centuries ago that they might actually cumber the ground. The PARKS-COMMISSION will ever aim to preserve the fortunate mean that

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\* The old LaFayette elm by the former mansion of *Governor Lincoln*.

† James B. Blake.



should divide a vigorous life and welcome shade from the barren existence and positive rot, which would soon become perilous. They expect to hear that the Highway Department is alive to the grand possibilities that might be forced to develop a new and brighter life throughout the Northern portion of Main Street. The question which will present itself in such case, must be,—given the opportunity, shall this Commission prevent its realization that a few trees may be spared a little while longer in impaired and very unprofitable duration?

The terrible storms of sleet beneath which the shrubs and trees of New England were bowed to the ground, split open, or snapped off short, during the latter days of January, and again more severely in the second week of February, A. D. 1886, did not spare Worcester. But, from concurring accounts, their ravages here were tender mercies contrasted with the destruction inflicted upon some of the hill towns of the County. The writer makes no pretence to being the oldest inhabitant, yet his memory goes back many years. And he is frank to confess that, in his whole experience he never knew a similar series of storms, characterized by such severity and of such stubborn persistence. We often awake in the morning to behold the sun shining upon a glittering coat that has enshrouded the landscape the night past. But scarcely once in a lifetime does it occur that men are privileged (if also grieved) to behold the havoc that can be wrought when the elemental forces are set to work in earnest. This may be nature's rough and ready method of pruning, only it must be admitted that she manifests a somewhat surly and ungovernable mood: putting rather more polish and glitter than edge upon her tools. Many trees will never recover their former symmetry and stateliness. A great number might better be felled than continue, sheer wrecks, to disfigure the landscape. Some that are filled with youthful vigor can be pollarded, and to that task, in more or less measure, this Commission has been addressing itself. No one body of men, however, can achieve what ought to be done in this matter, and it will devolve upon individual abutters to use the saw with discretion, before their own premises, in cases where it is impossible to await official action.



The subjoined correspondence, which bears no very ancient date and is pertinent to the subject, is inserted for general instruction :—

54 LINCOLN STREET, WORCESTER, MASS., Feb. 11, 1886.

MR. EDWARD W. LINCOLN,

DEAR SIR :

If I am correctly informed you hold the position of City Forester as well as one of the Park Commissioners, and that you are chiefly responsible for the cutting of sundry beautiful elms and horse chestnuts in Main Street.

Allow me a few words in behalf of the trees amid those you hear on the other side. Some abutters are so appreciative of the elegant shade trees of our cities on no account would they part from them. This ought to weigh something in the minds of our tree guardians when others, perhaps without esthetic taste, desire their removal.

Moreover, if the desires of the Highway Commissioners for removal of our shade trees were to be heeded, where would this terrible havoc stop and what good of shade trees anywhere. Many of our citizens are quite willing that the Highway Department should have a little extra work for the sake of the beauty, shade and health our trees afford. And in behalf of that *many* usually more silent than others you would naturally hear, I plead for no more destruction of trees save where enfeebled and dangerous or otherwise *necessary* to be removed.

I am told you are a lover of trees. I am sure thousands feel terribly hurt to see the magnificent elms of Main Street slaughtered. If an enemy had done this we should not have been surprised.

Think of the rare beauty and glory of cities the world around which have a beautiful foliage of this sort. Think of the fame of New Haven and Portland in this regard, and the deep lament over the terrible havoc of the Portland fire with its elegant shade trees. Think how Boston streets are, many of them, blessed with elegant shade which are, in many instances, more crowded in street and side-walk than our Main Street.

What a blessing to every city which has taken the pains to grow elegant shade trees.

Her orators always wax eloquent of those home ornaments and her people quietly luxuriate and praise her shade. The eye finds in this foliage grateful and quiet joy, and the beauty of such adornments is beyond price.

Besides, it takes *fifty years* to grow such trees as are ruthlessly hewn down in an hour. No wonder many of our citizens feel cut to the heart as we see the work of an evil hour.

For six months of the year we have no trouble from trees of any kind—the cold and wintry months. But when the hot weather comes, and our citizens are abroad where the reflected sun from high walls beats down sometimes with terrible severity, what so delightful as the shade of our lovely trees!

The seller of beverages of all sorts may wish them removed, but the pedestrians, the dumb horses compelled to wait their owners' pleasure, will turn a grateful heart to the kind planter and preserver of shade trees.

I need not add that, in the minds of many, there is a good point to be made from the relation of shade trees to the health of a city, which is certainly worth more than any argument in favor of their removal. Everybody almost knows their nourishment is largely animal poison, and that they throw off from their ten million leaves the pure oxygen to bless and sustain all animal life. No art of the apothecary can prepare its equal.

Excuse me, Mr. Forester, if I plead warmly, earnestly, for our blessed shade trees. I applaud your setting them out elsewhere, at convenient distances, and earnestly plead you will use all your power to spare every one possible, especially in our crowded streets, where their shade and beauty are such a comfort and beauty to our city.

I trust no word in the above will seem wanting in the proper respect due from a citizen to any officer of the government of his city. With sincere respect but earnest plea, I am,

Yours, very truly,

GEO. WHITAKER,

*Pastor of Grace Ch.*

PARKS-COMMISSION,

Worcester, Massachusetts,

12 February, A. D. 1886.

*Reverend Sir:—*

You will pardon my style, if it strikes you as unusually terse; but as I am busy enough at present, *wading* around my parish, I have little time to waste. That I may be brief, I must answer you, *seriatim*.

I do *not* hold the position of "City Forester," nor does the law create any such officer for Worcester. I have the honor, through the confidence of my colleagues, to be *Chairman* of the PARKS-COMMISSION, to which body is entrusted the "sole care, superintendence and management" of the Shade-Trees along the Streets and in the Public Grounds.

Your letter came to hand at 8 o'clock, this A. M., Feb. 12. At that time I was preparing to go out and perambulate the Streets and Parks, to discover the extent of the fearful wreck so obvious upon every side. As I read your complaint, baseless as I knew it to be better than any one, I looked abroad from my window and, beholding the havoc among the trees that my honored father and myself had set out, I could but exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" I, too, might have been querulous. But (as a Christian minister, you will certainly excuse me?) I bowed at sight before a Power with which nothing civic may compare. Did He select and restrict His destroying agencies to the "enfeebled and dangerous"? Acting for a fallible and mundane COMMISSION, I did: and there stopped.

Perhaps I may not fully comprehend your reflections upon the Highway Commissioner. If intended for censure, they are unjust. Otherwise, they are misplaced in the letter of a minister of religion. The trees in front of Brinley and Paine Blocks had been adjudged unsafe, by competent authority. The Highway Department did simply what it was asked to do, and what it could not refuse to do without subjecting the City to a responsibility that

might be onerous, and was ever imminent. Yet a Christian minister, without inquiry, elects to prejudge the case and to condemn unheard!

The ecstasy in which you were rapt when you indulged in that rhapsody about Shade-Trees meets with a modified sympathy from the writer. There are vastly more trees along our Streets whereof he saw the planting than with which he is coeval. There are few surviving on Main or Lincoln Streets that can attest by their living presence, as can his memory, the first reception of LaFayette. Their every trunk and branch is fraught to him, who played under them in boyhood, with associations at least as tender as they could possibly inspire in the transitory incumbent of a pulpit adhering to a nomadic church. As an officer of the city, he would not sacrifice them ruthlessly, nor spare them when they threatened life or limb.

You state your assurance that "thousands feel terribly hurt," &c., &c. Did you ever reflect how men are prone to exaggeration? The custom of repeating "Thus saith the Lord!" misleads him who utters it, doubtless, and causes him to confound the simple mouthpiece with the very Oracle. Do you ever count those whom you meet, to see how many it requires to fill your tally? When you have gathered one thousand men together (let alone the plural), you will see a far more numerous committee than is usually assembled to bear false witness to the felling of a dead and dangerous Shade-Tree.

You plead for "dumb horses compelled to wait their owners' pleasure" beneath trees which you think ought, but which I know had ceased, to furnish shade. How many years since was it, think you, that I requested Officer Matthews to try and ascertain the owner of one of those "dumb horses" which was making a hearty dinner off one of those very trees whose fate you deplore? He did learn—and the offender against the City Ordinances, who was too stingy to pay for the keeping of the animal at a stable, was a prominent worshipper at Grace Church! Would you know to what to attribute the death of that particular tree? The tireless jaws of that devout horse on weary Sundays, and not the axe or saw of the civic highway-man, who did but earn his just wage.

I write plainly, as one man to another; but also as one who feels that his conduct, in an official position, has been heedlessly assumed and recklessly prejudged. Therefore, I re-turn the cheek that was smitten, and subscribe myself, in all proper respect,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,  
*Chairman.*

To  
REVEREND GEO. WHITAKER,  
*Pastor of Grace Church.*

WORCESTER, MASS., Feb. 13, 1886.

MR. EDWARD W. LINCOLN:  
*Dear Sir:—*

I was exceedingly surprised to read your letter in reply to my plea for the Shade-Trees. I am led to feel I was unfortunate in my manner of writing. This I most sincerely regret. And I do now most humbly and earnestly ask your

pardon for any and every word which was not perfectly proper for a citizen, especially one in a representative relation, to present in a proper plea to an officer of the city.

I did, indeed, plead earnestly, I think not too earnestly, for the trees. I regret anything in my *manner* of doing it which was not appropriate and respectful.

I regret I have not the honor of your acquaintance. But I took pains, in view of what I saw in the summer, and also quite recently, to inquire who were the proper custodians, &c., concerning this subject.

I was informed, upon what I regarded most reliable authority, not only of yourself but of your care for the trees and love for them, &c.

I was also curious to know why such and so many excellent trees were being sacrificed.

I supposed I was correctly informed, and that I was representing a large sentiment in the community which ought to be heard. Excuse me, my dear sir, if I think I represent their sentiments now.

I have no words of disrespect for any of our City officers. Nor have I intentionally uttered any. But we all know how different departments of public work often apparently conflict.

I am sure you cannot disapprove of the right of respectful appeal of a kind but earnest letter from one who sympathizes with everything that means the improvement and adornment of our City; and while you welcome any honest words from any of your fellow-citizens, I think you will overlook and forgive any apparent discourtesy in the method of presenting them.

Trusting, if finding occasion to communicate again and now, you will only find from me that measure of good will and esteem which properly becometh fellow-citizens,

I am, yours most respectfully,

GEO. WHITAKER,

*Pastor Grace Church.*

Were "the game worth the candle," it might pay to contrast the tone of these, first and last, epistles special to the heathen. But a resort to the Scripture revealeth, once more, to the old "*Classical-School*" student, who walked, with Bacon and Folsom, under the shade-trees which have succumbed, perforce, to the exactions of the Chadwick Building, that soundest of all axioms:—

"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off!"

The acceptance of *Lake Park* by the City, brought with it new duties to be discharged at first by the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS. Frequent visits, early and late perambulation of the ground, and guarded absorption of advice proffered from all

quarters, each and all led to the straight-forward conclusion that little should be attempted save to develop Park-Ways and partially tame the uncouth wildness of Nature. A fine grove of trees standing upon the northwest corner of the new Park, suggested the possibility of supplying Societies and Schools with an unrivalled picnic site, free from burdensome expense. *Mr.* James Draper was willing to assume the task of clearing off the brush, stumps, and rocks (not stones); and the COMMISSION found ample reason to be glad of it, when they saw how admirably he achieved the work. A few clumps of the more hardy flowering and fragrant shrubs should be planted; and thereafter a place for out-door parties, of abundant space, easy access, and grateful cheapness, will be ever ready for the use and enjoyment of our whole people without distinction of age, sex, or previous condition of servitude. Those to whom distance lends the sole enchantment will, of course, continue to pay tribute to the railways, paring the lunch to eke out the fare!

A well of water, pronounced excellent by members of the Quinsigamond Boat Club,—conceded experts,—was dug during the spring of 1885, and that the convenience might be unfailing, *Mr.* Oliver K. Cook consented to supply a log-pump of his own make,—perhaps the sole thing of the kind that laughs to scorn the vicious hoodlum. Eighteen feet in depth, of which twelve were in ordinary excavation and six blasted from solid rock,—the water from that well should be cold enough to chill the oleo-margarine for any church excursion. Be it added that this copious spring was found in obedience to the indications of the divining-rod, as to which the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION propounds no creed,—utters no skepticism,—being simply content that the workmen found what was sought so easily and abundantly, just where they had been told to look for it.

“A stitch in time saves nine!” At the close of the year 1884 a paragraph relative to the improvement then commenced inspired the subjoined note:—

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS,  
Worcester, Mass., Dec. 26, 1884.

To

*Alderman* WILLIAM L. CLARK.

MY DEAR SIR:—An allusion in a recent issue of a local newspaper, to the new street around Lake Park, as “Lake Park Avenue,” suggests the imme-

date need of an official name for that street to prevent misconception and anticipate slang. We now have a "Park Avenue," and a "Lake Avenue." As this new street will encompass the new Park, to a great extent, why not designate it officially as **THE CIRCUIT**?

It would seem appropriate and certainly has the right *ring*.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

That suggestion found favor with the Highway Committee at the outset, and was subsequently accorded formal recognition by the City Council. The street is now known to the community as **THE CIRCUIT**: and suiting the popular taste, the suggestive title will be apt to stick.

The **PARKS-COMMISSION** were exceptionally fortunate in another respect. When securing an engineer to perfect a topographical map of *Lake Park*, they were lucky enough to find a landscape artist in the same person. The service of *Mr. McClure* was not merely perfunctory. He was revisiting an old field of observation whereto his own taste as that of his mentor, *Mr. Triscott* (appreciated too late!) had often and irresistibly attracted him, and therefore, to the watchful observer, his map could scarcely help being what it disclosed itself—a picturesque landscape in outline. So palpable was this that it confirmed the original determination of the **COMMISSION**, and led to the detail of *Mr. McClure*, as indicated in the following note:—

**PARKS-COMMISSION,**

Worcester, Mass., June 2, A. D. 1885.

**FRED. A. MCCLURE,**

*Civil Engineer:—*

After leaving you yesterday afternoon, I drove down to Lake Park and found the old cart road of which we spoke quite practicable. I wish now that you would appoint a time when it will be convenient to stake out a Rural drive—not a *City street*! commencing at the old ruin and following the cart track substantially to the big rock which is such a conspicuous feature in the landscape. I got my team as far as that. Keep to the south and south-east, much as we agreed when studying the survey. It is a very charming drive in outline and I doubt not that you can make it realize its full possibilities.

Here and there a turn-out should be allowed where such may be practicable and its need is obvious.

All necessary aid will be supplied upon your requisition.

Very sincerely,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

The devotion of a month by *Mr.* McClure, reinforced by the appliances at his command, sufficed to work a very material change in many features of the landscape. By the time that it became necessary for him to take his vacation, that he might go off and be bitten by his annual dog! the entire tract was virtually planned out for definitive construction. A double culvert over the *Holy Terror*;\* a driveway through the *Ford*;† a vision of romance by the *Twin-Sisters*;‡ a concourse up towards the *Shelter*;§ the picnic at the *Well*:— in brief a picturesque maze throughout a charming wilderness if only man can so far control himself as not to “improve” it *usque ad nauseam*. And everywhere—from all points of view—the Lake and Wigwam,—Grafton or Shrewsbury,—town and country, water and woodland, conspicuous if not obtrusive at every turn.

The bush scythe has held sway over the whole broad tract between Lake Avenue and the Bridle-Path, during the past year, and the grub-axe will find its stint hereafter. Brush and briar being cut away, little seems to be left in the clearing. But Nature, which so readily repairs the deliberate wickedness of man, or even his careless waste, may be trusted to maintain its persistent evolution from the ashes of briar and bramble. The sun, at last, can now penetrate those tangled recesses, and light and life are sure to emanate from its vivifying rays. The COMMISSION doubt not that shade enough will be furnished by the trees that were spared and by those that will rapidly spring up. A refreshing breeze is almost always blowing over that *Park*,

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\*“How does that suit you?” asked McClure, as he pointed out to Steven Rowe the apparently hopeless swamp through which he was expected to build a double culvert. One glance, and “Oh! The Holy Terror!” broke from the lips of the veteran stone-layer.

†A “Ford,” when the brook is up.

‡The remarkable cleft boulder.

§The pavilion erected to shield from sudden storms.

even in the hottest days. A glance over the rippling surface of the fathomless Lake, of itself revives and invigorates. And where Nature ultimately fails to replace, man will be prepared to meet any reasonable requirement, with a ready supply of deciduous or evergreen growth, such as the customary foresight of the PARKS-COMMISSION keeps in constant and ample reserve.

The subjoined note will doubtless prove as interesting to the community now as it did, when received, to the PARKS-COMMISSION. It is not beyond hope, howsoever the screech of parsimony may disturb the air, that the interest of *Alderman* Crane, and of his official associates, in the PUBLIC GROUNDS, may manifest itself in some other form than antiquarian research.

WORCESTER, July 24, 1885.

E. W. LINCOLN, Esq.,

*My Dear Sir:—*

I am quite sure that within the bounds of the new Park, at the Lake, once stood the house of Samuel Leonard, of Bridgewater. And it was from that house that his son Samuel was stolen by the Indians in the year 1696. Investigations thus far point to the spot on the hill, where the old cellar-hole is found, as being the site, or near the site, where the old log-house of Samuel Leonard stood. It would seem the best natural location for his house, on that beautiful rise of ground. About one year after the capture of Samuel Leonard, or Leonardson, his master took part in the descent on the town of Haverhill, Mass., and succeeded in capturing Mrs. Dustin and Mrs. Neff. The story of their capture and escape, by killing the Indians, will be found on page 185 of Barber's Historical Collections of Massachusetts, and forms an interesting item to the history of Worcester and her new park; for I am quite sure that it was from that territory that the Leonard boy was taken. My business has demanded so much of my time that I have only been able to give to this subject a few moments at a time, which is my excuse for so much delay in working this matter up. I shall have to go to Boston now before I can connect all the titles to the land from Leonard down to present owners, which I hope to do.

During the construction of the Boston and Worcester R. R., along there, a Mr. Young lived in the old house that covered this cellar-hole, and one day several men were sitting in one of the rooms when a large stone came flying over from a blast, crashed through the building, and killed one of the men in the room.

So, you see that the old cellar-hole has a history of modern, if not of ancient, time.

Yours, with great respect,

E. B. CRANE.



The elucidation of this matter will be awaited with patience by this COMMISSION. There can be no dispute that the first settlers of Worcester located towards the Lake. Whether "Lo! the poor Indian" raised their hair; or that errant mastodon, seeking a ford at King's Point, frightened them from their clearings; or they were scared away by some primeval sash and blind maker rampaging and roaring around to see whose *excreta* fouled his settling-basin; this, at least, may be assumed with confidence; that whatsoever in the premises is worth finding out, *President* Crane, and his Society of Antiquity, will know sooner or later. Thereafter, will be ample time for this COMMISSION to erect flag-staff or cairn.

May 11, A. D. 1885, the *Chairman* of the PARKS-COMMISSION received from the City Clerk a "statement" addressed "To his Honor Charles G. Reed, Mayor, the Gentlemen of the Board of Aldermen and the City Council of Worcester, Mass.," and by the *Honorable Council* referred to this COMMISSION. That "statement" purported to embody the opinions of what was entitled the "Evangelical Pastors' Union" upon the subject of "Public Sunday Amusements"; venting more especially a remonstrance against "last year's (1884) innovation"—"the musical concerts in the Public Parks on the Lord's Day, and the use of public funds for that purpose." As the reference by the *Hon. City Council* did not ask for any action by this COMMISSION, nor even an essay upon the the theme of Sunday harmonics outside of pew limits; and as the statement of the Evangelical Union avowedly deprecated action of any sort, there remained only the simple duty of placing the documents on file. But the *Chairman* "invited his soul to loaf" with Matthew 12:1, &c.; Mark 2:23, &c.; and Luke 6:1, &c., seeking everywhere and finding mental refreshment and moral inspiration.

Subsequently, on the 5th of August, a communication was received from the Military Committee of the *City Council*, whereof a copy is subjoined:—

WORCESTER, MASS., Aug. 4, 1885.

TO EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN, *Chairman*.

*My Dear Sir:—*

The Joint Standing Committee on Military Affairs of the City Council are

possessed of the sum of Three Hundred Dollars, appropriated by the City Council for the purpose of giving open-air concerts.

The Committee desire me to submit to the Hon. Commissioners of Public Grounds whether it is their wish that any of said concerts be given upon "Elm Park," and, if so, on what dates?

Very respectfully yours,

E. O. PARKER,

*For the Com.*

The matter was duly considered by the COMMISSION, as it had been presented to them, and their conclusions set forth, as follows:—

PARKS-COMMISSION,

WORCESTER, MASS., 7th August, A. D. 1885.

To Alderman EDWARD O. PARKER.

*My Dear Sir:—*

Your note of inquiry, in which you state that the "Committee on Military Affairs of the City Council are possessed" of a sum of money "appropriated for the purpose of giving open-air concerts,"—and "submitting to the Hon. Commissioners of Public Grounds whether it is their wish that any of said concerts be given upon Elm Park; and, if so, on what dates,"—was duly received, on the 5th inst., by the PARKS-COMMISSION—the legal successor of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS—and I have the honor to state that the PARKS-COMMISSION cherish or entertain no especial feeling in the premises, and have, therefore, no wish to express.

With great respect,

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

The habit of crossing a stream before you come to it is one that never commended itself to this COMMISSION. Should the water be deep, there might occur accidents. Were it foul or even turbid, Millbury would sue, claiming that it was roiled through some lâches of this COMMISSION. Should the channel be dry, *ex-Senator* Whitin, who will have some suggestions to offer, at the next Creation, concerning the proper grade of river-beds, would find a ready *ad dam! num* for implied diversion. "Let the squirrel sit!" exhorts the philosopher among our ex-Mayors.

Wrote the *Chairman* of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS years ago:—

"In this vision of the future the Mill-'Privilege' disappears. Aqua-facture dies, and yet lives; it ceases to turn wheels—*ex mero motu*—but, heated and

compressed, its forces impel machinery, make fortunes, nor mar neighborhoods. The dam subsides, the brook ripples on, industry prospers, and no man is worse off. The pipe, or conduit, whichever is preferred, conducts water from the Apennines to Rome: perhaps, in this day and generation, we should say,—from Asnebumskit to Millbury and Tasseltop. But the *Cloaca Maxima* is never diverted from the Tiber."

To which in its thorough scope, the observation and study of years constrain him to adhere more closely. True, his suggestion has led the heathen to rage furiously, yet what countless multitudes reject the very Gospel. Reviewing all the criticism and sharp exception to which he has been subjected for the past fifteen months, that he may dismiss the theme once for all, the writer can but repeat:—Take down, or perforate the dams! suffer the river to flow and chafe, and fret, without let or hindrance! restock it with fish,—protecting them thereafter, as natural scavengers! and the complaint must disappear, with its unnatural cause. Obvious it might be styled, would some people look before their noses!

There was a man in Dam-burgh, who thought he smelt a scent,  
At home, abroad, indoor or out,— thro' sash and blinds it went.  
How very queer! or far or near, it meets his eager quest,  
You'd scarce suppose a town with stench could be so *self-posses't*!  
But yet, that taint! it makes him faint: each sharply-pungent whiff  
Comes fraught with what to him betrays the old familiar sniff.  
He snuffs the ground,—the fault is found! beneath his nose, forsooth,  
Do Mill-race, pond, and dam, suffused, disclose the fragrant truth!

The position of Worcester, in the political scheme of Massachusetts, was fixed originally in the ordinances of God at the creation. The place of Millbury, as a geographical expression, was determined when man saw that a current of water could be arrested and constrained to turn a mill-wheel. The proto-settler of Worcester pre-empted this turn-table of central Massachusetts, and the existing City attests his prescience. The dam-builder who tried to found Millbury upon a fabrication of sash and blinds, got discouraged as some post-diluvian *excreta* was washed down from Asnebumskit; and wandering off to "fresh fields and pastures new," left both offended nostrils and vacuous skull for a latter-day puzzle to Raymenton and Putnam. It is but the

survival of the fittest; an example of the operation of that inexorable law which attracts men irresistibly to more propitious conditions. Brookfield, Lancaster, or Sutton may have had the better start; and for mere beauty of landscape few towns can even now compete with them. But the stage-coach must run from one colony to another, and what more convenient or practicable route than that traced by the Indian File! As it was in the beginning, it is now;—and shall it not be ever? Worcester is central; has become more and more accessible; and attracting the best and brightest of the youth from the county-towns, makes much of them, sends them to the City Hall and State House, and will see them, as she has before, advance by universal acclaim to the Gubernatorial chair. As it was with Northborough and Royalston, may it not be in turn with all the rest which shall keep their lamps filled and trimmed! After a certain stage of development a Town or City will grow by its own momentum. Is it our fault? and shall legislation enact it to be our crime?—here in Worcester,—that the invention of the steam engine, and its application to locomotion, have given water-power and the mill-*privilege* a very black eye!

Certain gentlemen, perhaps as well known for a curious political shiftiness as for any acquaintance with the physical contour of the State, have consulted with certain other gentlemen—(“experts,” these latter, who devoted an entire day of eight? hours to a personal investigation!)—and thereupon report to His Excellency that they know no more than their fore-runners in a similar line of assumption, and that wisdom virtually died with that State Board of Health, Nov. 17, 1881, whose inferences and conclusions had been so decisively repudiated by the General Court. They are undoubtedly competent judges of the causes that will convert the Democratic vote for governor to a *reductio ad absurdum*; are adepts in collecting cheerful assessments for the Republican treasury (unless O’Brien should be a candidate); and are naturally familiar with the gentle flow of the Charles and Mystic, until the onset of the tides drives back sewage and stream in one irresistible reflux. Yet what do they know,—as do some of us whose lives have been spent by its banks,—of a

stream that unimpeded, might well be termed a mountain torrent ; that falls perceptibly in every mile, and precipitates itself in its short course of forty miles from Quinsigamond suburb, straight downward four hundred feet to the sea !

But, say our guides in empiricism, as they blindly lead us to the ditch,—Worcester is prosperous, populous, and has the prospect of a brilliant future. Aye,—but was its past founded upon prodigality and unthrift ? Is not its present burdened by many disadvantages of circumstance and location, and of both combined ? so that it has required close application and shrewdest management to secure success where otherwise would have resulted adversity. Is it for the welfare of the Commonwealth that its second city should be oppressed, borne down,—if not crushed in the vain search for a sanitary chimera ? The cash, or credit (either a synonym for ultimate grievous taxation !) that these speculators in visionary theories would worse than waste in leaching the sands, might be applied to some purpose were they devoted to storing up the surplus waters of *Tatnuck Brook*. That enormous sum, which it is so flippantly advised that the city of Worcester should squander, would suffice to construct dams behind which might be saved a supply ample to clean out all the settling-basins of Millbury,—even the Town itself,—could but the ten righteous men be found for whose sake was the promise that it should be spared. Were it not as well that men of common sense and brains, who have had their whole attention concentrated upon this matter for years, should at last gain audience ? Men of parts,—even if they have brains,—provided they are afflicted with “*eminent gravity*,” merely allow themselves to be diverted, for the nonce, from their usual devotions on State Street, or at the club ; swallow at a gulp the plausible assertions and glib theories of their hired experts !\* and report that Millbury smells something offensive during two or three months of the year, when her mill-ponds are drawn down ; that Worcester has been a thrifty and well-conducted City (whose responsibility for that smell we elect to take upon hearsay

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\**Medici experimenta per mortes agunt.*

PLIN. *passim.*

or assume), and that we advise the General Court to incur the risk of arresting or ruining her prosperity, as the easiest solution of a problem with which we confess ourselves incompetent to grapple.

The simple fact of a preference for Intermittent Downward Filtration, as against the Scour of the Current, and Broad Irrigation, both of which were provided by Him who evolved the Blackstone valley from Chaos; that it is advised before a trial of such a plausible scheme as that of *Col. Waring*, for which the present writer, at least, had no sneers; betrays how much Science (?) has to prove before it can vindicate its title,—discloses how little engineering it takes, in these days, when the graduate strikes an attitude, and the freshman works the plane-table,—to engineer! But the men who were

“to the manner born”

know that there is not a water-plain along the entire valley of the Upper Blackstone, whether of its affluents or of the main stream, that is not underlain with a false, treacherous bottom. The whole subsoil, when you get to it, is a shifting, fluid quicksand. The engineers, detailed to put a bit in the mouth of the Mississippi, awoke one fine morning to discover their scientific row of piles sliding down the stream, yet retaining their perpendicularity. Although the very bed of the river is thus proved to be in motion, it is of less concern to the engineers, whose faith is set and theories based upon the dogma of a fathomless Federal Treasury. The United States are prosperous, you see, and have a bright future! But, *ceteris paribus*, it is of consequence and immediate relation to the present issue. If the subsoil between Worcester and Millbury consists of quicksand; as it most assuredly does along Beaver, Lincoln, Mill, and Tatnuck (Kettle, doubtless), *Brooks*, what is to become of the Pure Water drawn by Gegenheimer, and a score of other citizens of Millbury, from their driven wells, after Worcester has been forced to filter its sewage into those sands? The sewage, we are assured, will be deodorized by Act of the General Court, even as by a similar enactment it was first authorized to flow unchallenged. Will

rendering it odorless make it innocuous also? is a possible conundrum for the owners of drive-wells; and again ultimately for Worcester, which will be charged with fouling them. The City pollutes the stream and must resort to intermittent downward filtration. In that way, it will defile the water of the drive-wells, when the General Court can enact the waste of another Half-Million! Do you ask, where is the money to come from? You fool! has not Worcester a "present condition and future prospects?" Cannot she mortgage them and issue bonds secured upon the interest of money spent! Should all experiments result in failure, Sanitary Empiricism can be depended upon for explanations and glib excuses: Worcester supplying a ready scapegoat and victim. The Commonwealth will be so much more prosperous, you see! after its second city has been oppressed, depressed, sacrificed upon the altar of a qualified Stink!

"Cannot you deodorize this gas?" asked the late *Judge* Byington of John H. Blake, expert witness *in re* Commonwealth *ads.* the Worcester Gas Light Company. "Cannot you eliminate the perceptible and offensive smell?" "Possibly,—were it desirable!" was the intelligent reply of the man who had been there all his life to the shallow, if honest, inquisitor. "There are noxious elements in Gas which Science has not yet learned to extract or neutralize; and, until we do know how, it were better to endure the scent, because through it we can detect an escape, and thereby anticipate danger."

Cannot you purify or, at least, deodorize sewage? owl-like engineers (?) from the modern Athens! We will not be positive; but some of us who get our living by rushing in

"where angels fear to tread,"

are persuaded that there can be no serious, certainly no insuperable, difficulty, if the offending Town or City be thrifty; possesses or can borrow enough Gold to form a Rule; and,—more than all else,—Fifteen Thousand voters who will allow themselves to be divided, and their energy dissipated, in a day and generation wherein Stewart Parnell has shown what can be done, and won, by the inflexible determination and simple cohesion of little more than an awkward squad!

“ Having eyes, see ye not ? And having ears, hear ye not ? And do ye not remember ? ” that the Ballot, ay, and the Boycott, are our own, if we are bold and shrewd enough to use them ; —no matter who would like to go to Congress and busies himself building wing-dams in arrest or diversion of the popular judgment, with the “ Golden Rule ” for his mudsill ! For did not He, who spake as never man before, or since, declare : “ *He that is not with me is against me !* ”

Boards of Health ! sources of continual discomfort and worry. Systems and theories of Sanitation ! which spoil a man’s daily life and poison his earthly existence.\* That was an honest, if blunt, confession of the Spaniard, though carved upon his tombstone : “ I was well ; would be better ; took physic, and—here I am ! ” Four-fifths of this gab and gush about Filth and Sanitation is stuff and nonsense. The other fifth is invested in a joint-stock company that manufactures silver shrines to the great goddess *Cloacina* ! The health of average Humanity is good enough and with cheapening and increasing comforts, has been steadily improving. A man might well afford to live, towards this close of the Nineteenth Century, were it not for these costly fads of scientific (!) nuisance. Few die that ought not. How many exist that might perhaps be spared ! But this miserable scare of Sanitation ;—that assumes the inscrutable and demonstrates the self-evident ;—is worked for all that it can be made to yield, frightening the ignorant, puzzling the better informed but yet timorous, and answering its purpose, Oh, silly tax-payer, whose heifer it is that is milked !

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\* SEWAGE.—A London paper says that the sewage problem has yielded a new notion. Sir J. B. Lawes is of opinion that the most profitable way to dispose of sewage is to send it to the sea ; its phosphates and other constituents being advantageous to the fisheries, and therefore as likely to come back to us in the shape of food as if spread upon the land, while the acceptance of the idea for practical purposes will make an end of all experiments for the agricultural employment of sewage. Any less capable person would find it difficult to obtain a hearing for the proposals that are based on the idea, but the public will gladly listen to one who has certainly mastered the theory of food production and the utilization of waste material. There is a direct gain, doubtless, to the subject in the fact that it will be regarded from a quite new point of view. We shall not only have to discover the weak points in the



Wrote that sturdy yeoman and keen observer,—William Smith, of Woolston, England,—no longer ago than Nov. 24th, ult.:—

“As to sanitary matters, they are a reckless expenditure look where you may, and in many cases are the direct cause of fever. The Stink-Officers are

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new proposals, but shall perhaps have to rummage amongst our own prejudices, to determine which are to be got rid of to make room for wiser counsels. Whether sound or unsound, practical or nonsensical, we are certainly put upon a new tack for fresh and unexpected exploration.

There is much in this of sound sense. Nature generally provides an antidote for every evil; and she does for polluted sewage. Philadelphia just now is worrying over the water problem. Much sewage naturally drains into the river, as it does into every river in the world that supplies a large city with water. The Water Department is superintended by a gentleman of admirable character and superior scientific attainments, and he and the chemists are finding all sorts of terrible things in the water. There is not enough oxygen, and now it is too much albuminoid ammonia, and now too much free ammonia. To-day he would drive away all the population from the banks of the river by making it impossible for them to get rid of the sewage except by wells and sinks; to-morrow he would abolish all the pumps because the water wells get the sewage from the sinks. Another time he would have some thousands of dollars to dredge the mud from the bottom of the river, and again he would have some more thousands to “oxygenate” the water by artificial means.

Then he worries them by telling them that there is just one more death in ten thousand than there is in London, which is considered the healthiest city in the world; so that the average duration of a man's life, supposed to be about thirty-five years, is shortened five hours by living in Philadelphia rather than in London. To remedy this in the manner he wants would require fifty or sixty millions of dollars. When a noted health reformer, Mrs. Isabella Hooker, was recently showing how much the modern comforts of life shortened life, and was taxed with inconsistency in not practicing what she preached, she retorted that she was willing to give a few years, for the sake of the comforts. And indeed long life is not the only blessing we desire. Most people would be willing to give a few hours of life rather than groan under a taxation that would require the proceeds of many hours of labor a week to pay. And it is unnecessary as Sir J. B. Lawes hints. A thick bed of aquatics in the bed of a river will “oxygenate” the water, and they will feed on all the ammonia that a moderate amount of sewage yields. Fish will eat all the “albuminoid” material, and it will be pretty foul water that the two together will not clean. It makes no difference what goes into river water so that the worst gets out again before people drink it. If Philadelphia would keep its river stocked with fish, and encourage the water plants, and get a few large subsiding reservoirs to give time to settle the mud, the millions required by scientific superintendence might be spent on happy homes. The lesson may be useful to people grappling with the sewage question everywhere.—*The Gardener's Monthly (Phila.)*.

making a grand harvest out of it, while contractors are laughing in their sleeves and pocketing the plunder."

The writer, to whom almost alone in this latter day it has been left to preach the gospel of Gravitation! has advised that the whole trouble be solved by ceasing to contravene the ordinance of God,—letting the river flow and fret unimpeded. Take down the Dams! for they are an anachronism; or pierce them with sluice-ways wherethrough they may be flushed at will. Water in motion is pure and sparkling; or if roiled from any cause, will soon clarify itself. Why is it not in rapid motion throughout the whole course of the Blackstone? First, because some pre-emptors of "Privilege!" chose to nullify this Divine Law in order that they might grind, and saw, and—put money in their purse! And next, their heirs or assigns, well-aware of the inferiority and incertitude of Water-Power, yet bent upon levying a contribution from the community at large; by way of an exaction from their natural necessities; aim to get indemnity for a substitution which they were so thoroughly persuaded is essential that they have already provided for it! Two years have elapsed since, according to the local correspondence of the *Gazette* :—

"MILLBURY :—C. D. Morse, who, among others in town, has been very much troubled by lack of Water-Power, this season, has put in a steam-engine. The work of building a new engine-house 37 by 25 feet; a boiler-house 34 by 17 feet; an ell at the north end of the shop 27 by 17 feet; and setting up the engine and boiler, which has been progressing some weeks, is now nearly completed." \*

And so with them all! Not one of those Dam-Owners who arrests the current but knows that Water-Power a-down the Blackstone is comparatively worthless for inadequacy or incertitude; not one of them but has supplied himself (perhaps, as some *Privileges!* to impede the natural course of the stream are corporate, the phrase should be *It-self!*), with powerful and adequate steam motors. "*Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*"

"*They mourned for those who perished in the cutter,  
But most they mourned the biscuits, and the butter.*"

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\*The equipment, with steam engines and boilers, of the other mills along the Blackstone, was noted in the report of the COMMISSION OF PUBLIC GROUNDS, A. D. 1881.—E. W. L.

The current has been destroyed by our Dams; and of course our mill-ponds, become settling-basins, foul with sediment from our back-houses, refuse, and the very stagnation, from the necessity of the case more than of nature, stink: and therefore we will create a public sentiment to complain of the sewage from Worcester, six miles off.

Our Dams are worthless, as such,—insomuch as we prudently substituted steam for a motor. Yet we will retain them, to perpetuate that rot, render the offence inveterate, and possibly in the long run extort stink-money from Worcester.

Since now we will assert that our sole dependence, for water to feed our boilers, is upon the river; and that the impurities held in solution are so many and great that it can be used no longer. We surrender the stream, but are unable to use its water to make steam because Worcester has so loaded it with impurities.

Is that allegation any truer than others from the same quarter? *Non constat!* Local correspondents of the *Gazette*, and *Spy*, offer the subjoined contemporaneous record:—

“MILLBURY:—A well has recently been dug under the direction of Mr. John Gegenheimer, agent for the Cordis Mills Co., 22 feet in diameter and 8 feet deep, which has been planked all around it and has 6½ feet of water in it, or about 17,000 gallons. A three-inch iron pipe has been laid 1,800 feet to the mills, and the steam pump from the boiler is connected with the well to supply the boiler. When the well was dug a steam pump was set at work to keep the water down, and for six hours they pumped 150 gallons a minute and just kept the water down. This water will, in time, be used in the mill and tenements.”

“SUTTON:—Tompkins Brothers, who have sunk a number of driven wells in Millbury, have to-day completed one for Mrs. Rich, in this town, from which an abundance of pure water flows.”

And all through that River-Plain, as along the intervalles by Mill and Tatnuck *Brooks*, may be found that same superficial foot of half-decayed loam; that same foot and a half of coarse to fine gravel; and, for a subsoil everywhere, and characteristic of the whole geological formation, the same bed of quicksand, shifty yet tenacious, saturated with pure water as Gegenheimer and a score of others found at need; but which, first a Board of Health, good Lord! and now a Drainage Commission from State

*Street*, good Devil! would have the General Court compel Worcester to transmute into a filthy leach! Fragrant and mighty *Cloacina*! What gospel in thy name will not Beacon Hill next belch forth and eruct!

If water for boilers must be had from the Blackstone, it can be filtered and clarified, as it should be if its sole use is to minister to private greed. But it should be done at the cost and expense of those who located themselves at the base of the declivity, electing to receive the *detritus*, the rotten logs, back-houses, decayed animals,—stroking their sleek paunches in unctuous complacency as they gather in the shekels—net profit of tariff monopoly hybridized with mill-“privilege!” and exclaiming in the pithy phrase of Vespasian,—“Does it smell? oh, my son!”

The “Drainage Commission” assert that the “rapid growth (of Worcester) must soon make some change absolutely imperative, unless the Blackstone River is to be permanently condemned for a common sewer.” But, bless their little, innocent souls! why not? For what else is it now, or can it ever be made, so useful? Suppose you stop the in-flow of sewage which it has received, to a greater or less degree, since the first pioneer settled upon its banks! The refuse from Factories continues a worse offense;—in most cases, all that can be detected. But grant that it has been rendered clear and pellucid! *Cui bono*? That the people of Millbury may adore the liquid element in humble imitation of the Fire-Worshippers! That it may be permitted Gegenheimer, Morse, and Simpson, to arise with the sun and, falling prone upon the escarpment of each dam, gaze in blended rapture and reverence upon the several rills as they mingle in a common flood from the Ramshorn, Leicester and Asnebumskit!

Says a naturalist who, building no dams, could afford to observe natural processes:—

“A very slight declivity suffices to give the running motion to water. Three inches a mile, in a smooth, straight channel, gives a velocity of about three miles an hour.”

Well! is it nigher sixty or eighty feet that the Blackstone falls in the first eight miles below Worcester? And how much of that in a single half-mile within the town of Millbury!

Is it our fluid sewage,—with that of Leicester from Kettle Brook, which stinks? Or the stagnant waters of Dam-burgh. How long since those settling-basins were cleansed, which nature, if let alone, would have long since washed pure! How many years since those pools were vexed by man! When,—ever, since the Blackstone Canal had to be abandoned because the manufacturers stole its waters, has the cheek of a Dam-Owner crimsoned with shame at the knowledge that flume and flash-board were alike tight and fast, no matter how high the freshet! At what time were the corks ever drawn and those bottles allowed to blow off their sediment! No! rather let water run to waste, than that those pet cess-pools be clarified and sweetened! Better and more gainful to make a case against Worcester (the “*Golden Rule*,” you see?), than suffer the channel of the River to be purged from their own offence by the floods accumulating above! Says the *Evening Gazette* of Feb. 14, 1884:—

“MILLBURY.—The water in the Blackstone River, this morning, is the highest that it has been for several years.”

Says the *Spy* of March 20, 1884:—

“At the request of the Blackstone valley mill-owners, the water in the Holden Reservoir\* has been drawn down two and one-half feet. It was feared that with a sudden thaw more water would run through the Blackstone River than could be handled. Partially drawing off the water in the Reservoir will allow the holding back of quite a quantity, which would otherwise trouble the mill-owners.”

And at about the same time,—

“MILLBURY.—The Sash and Blind shop of C. D. Morse & Co. was obliged to stop most of the machinery, Thursday and Friday, on account of back water.”

And so,—forever and aye. At what time, since last Autumn, could not these settling-basins, in Dam-burgh, have been filled as fast as they were emptied, and their contents clarified at will,—had the will been as facile as the way? But no! the Christ-like Dam-Owners who have choked the current, and would now

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\* Not then safe: nor yet in possession of the City.

Not safe,—the mill-owners being too penurious to build a secure dam!

E. W. L.

“corner” the Golden Rule, fear that “more water may run through the Blackstone than could be handled!” Well,—why should it be “handled”? Why not let it flow and fret unimpeded, purifying itself as it courses along, precisely as the good God intended when He stored up its fountains! The unobstructed flow and rush of the River are essential to the very existence of the valley, through its entire length. Sash and blinds can be made elsewhere as well as at a mill-dam.

Were the Dams removed, or pierced, as they should be; water for a motor in this day and generation being as much of an anachronism as the Stage-Coach for a conveyance; the problem is solved for all who have not worthless “*privileges*” that they would fain unload upon the tax-payers. The stream resumes its natural course and flow. Obsolete canals,—long since abandoned for their original purpose,—cease to be used for mill-races, by the side of the highway, to deceive Drainage Commissioners who cannot distinguish for themselves, and are not told by the Dam-Owners, the difference and wide distance between such races and the river itself. The ordinary flow of the stream bears with it sediment, sewage, factory refuse, in manageable volume; depositing it everywhere in infinitesimal quantity, harming nobody and causing no offence. The floods of Spring and late Autumn overspread the broad water-plains, dispersing whatever elements of fertility are held in suspense; nourishing vegetation of all kinds as does simple irrigation everywhere; and the whole operation without damage to communities or so much as a pretence of injury to individual comfort or health. The special pleaders for Dam-burgh aver that God failed in His work of creation! and that without their recent puny obstructions of plank and stone, for which they tremble at each unusual freshet, there would be no River! Yet, how was it before there was any Millbury? One of those “leaders of the blind,” whose knowledge may be duly estimated from his statement that poor little “Lynde Brook is one of the sources of the Blackstone” River! ejects the “gall” that Worcester having taken possession of Lynde and Tatnuck *Brooks* for a water-supply; “and Mill Brook for a Sewer; there is left only the scanty stream from Pond to supply a river that has ceased to exist”!

How has the river "ceased to exist," except in the lively fancy of a Dam-Owner? What became of Kettle Brook,—the while,—whereof possibly this local geographer never heard! Or mayhap did C. A. D. from Leicester, advise that its mention and perfume should be suppressed, alike? That tireless statesman who meandered in wild effusion through Worcester South last November, conferring his benediction upon Senators and Representatives, Elect; enlightening each Town how well it had run a-muck against Worcester; and promising that the Blackstone should be forthwith transmuted, by Act of the General Court! into a new Pharpar and Abana,—if not a modern sanitary Jordan! But, has anybody drank or dried up the water that Worcester took from Lynde *Run* and Tatnuck *Brook*? and which, if not so taken, would have been dissipated in the expanse of Narragansett Bay as soon as it could get by the countless Dams. Sewage is a solution, not a solid. Its solvent is this precise water that the "leaders of the blind" would "deceive the very elect," at the State House, into supposing is never returned when once diverted! Worcester stores away, in her Reservoir, at Leicester, nigh upon 700,000,000 gallons of water that without such storage, would run out in a few days and be wasted. Similar is the case at the Holden Reservoir, with its 400,000,000 gallons now, and basins of a possible ultimate enlargement to the capacity of 2,000,000,000 gallons. From those Reservoirs the supply to the River is steady, unintermittent; where otherwise, in a dry season, there would be none. And this, Oh learned geographer of Damborough! whose Blackstone has "ceased to exist!" at all times supplementing the volume of Kettle and Rain's Horn *Brooks*, bearing through Worcester, as they do, every manner of filth and refuse from Leicester and Millbury.

But,—now come the apostles of a newer dispensation,—a latter-day gospel of Pure Water with less than thirteen parts solids! pew-fillers, to whom is preached a Christ known to Mary but never to His Father, whose affectation it is to prefer a so-styled "Golden Rule" to the fundamental Law established by God at the very Creation. These religious *dilettanti*,—sciolists of a genteel parlor skepticism,—to whom it is all one whether that

Rule was imposed by Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, or—the Marquis of Queensberry! so long as it is not base metal;—feel their bowels yearn as they hearken, with mouths in the dust, to a concentrated and concerted cry from the owners of mill-“*privileges!*” a-down the Blackstone. To such Cherubim that “Golden Rule” is the one inflexible monitor, guiding their every immaculate action and thought. To them each day is accounted lost, wherein they have not foregone some private or partisan advantage;—promoted in part at least the schemes of their personal or political opponents. What, to such consummate intuition and sublime self-poise, can the Law of Gravitation appear but “a stumbling block, and foolishness,”—with its inexorable corollaries of trituration, comminution, absorption, or evaporation! A few active men, prompted by self-interest, excite a neighboring community to a suspicion of injury. Can anything be more natural or excusable? continually do cry the Cherubim. But, simultaneously with the accusation, a tenfold larger population is condemned, out of hand, as guilty of a “grievous wrong!” Grant that neither nest is as clean as it might be. What nobler or better rule than this, ancient as Jurisprudence itself? “*They who would seek Equity must ensue Equity.*”

And so Worcester is to be “wounded in the house of its friends” by a concurrence of ambition, priestcraft, and greed,—the “Better Element!” (Christ’s name for it was—Pharisaism!) such as proved fatal to every city in history that had “prospects,” or was worth saving,—from Athens, and Rome, down through the centuries. Such oligarchies of intense politics, cant, or avarice, invariably ruin when they are impotent to rule.

The City of Worcester has shown, heretofore, in what liberal manner she could deal with those whom she had unwittingly harmed: expending, of her own accord, more than Three Hundred Thousand Dollars to remedy and repair the effects of a negligence whereof the Courts of the Commonwealth have since declared her innocent, and therefore not answerable in law. The expenditure of even so large a sum as a Half-Million Dollars, at the arbitrary behest of the General Court, in itself causes no terrors to the people of this City. Jealous rivals of our prosper-



ity,—if such exist, “need lay no such flattering unction to their souls.” In a just cause,—just because it commends itself to our own conscience,—we have shown how lightly we could assume, and as well endure, burdens grievous to be borne.

But we do object to unthrift or waste. We do contend against the arbitrary and irrational constraint which would compel us to divert our savings from legitimate employment, to test schemes which, if not wholly empirical, have no other ostensible merits than that they have not yet been proved a complete failure under the moister skies and milder climate of England.

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#### COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SIX.

#### AN ACT

To Restore Comity and Clear Water Along The Upper Blackstone.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate, and House of Representatives, in General Court Assembled:—*

SECTION 1. The Town of Millbury is hereby annexed to the City of Worcester, of which City, for the better peace of the Commonwealth and the purposes of this Act, Millbury shall henceforth constitute and remain a component parcel and part.

SECTION 2. The City of Worcester is hereby authorized and directed, within —— years, to take at the sworn valuation returned to the assessors of Millbury, A. D. 1885, all the easements or privileges of any name or nature whatsoever (factory-buildings excepted) within that Town, that tend to obstruct or impede the natural flow of the Blackstone River; to remove all dams or other artificial hindrances to the current, or to pierce them with sufficient sluice-ways; that the stream may once more be free and unvexed and its channel open.

SECTION 3. In any suit for damages under this Act it shall not be lawful to set forth the value of a mill privilege, or dam, under its original unimpaired grant or prescription: but the measure of injury shall be taken to be the absolute loss of power exclusive of its disuse during periods of drought, excessive flood, or substitution of steam.

SECTION 4. The Mayor and Aldermen of said City shall have the same power to determine the value of and assess upon Real Estate the amount of betterments accruing to said Real Estate by the removal or remedy of such obstructions, and by the clarifying of said Blackstone River, that is conferred

by Chapter 51, of the Public Statutes upon Boards of City or Town Officers authorized to lay out streets or ways. Provided, however, that no assessment shall be laid upon Real Estate except such as shall be shown, by the oath of its owner, to be affected or depreciated by the smell from the River.

SECTION 5. For the purpose of defraying the expenses incurred under the provisions of the Act, the City Council of the City of Worcester shall have authority to issue, from time to time, and to an amount not exceeding the sum actually expended for the taking of such easements or mill-privileges, in Millbury along the River, bonds, or certificates of debt to be denominated on the face thereof,—“GOLDEN RULE LOAN;”—and to bear interest at such rates and to be payable at such times as said City Council may determine. For the redemption of such loan said City Council shall establish a Sinking Fund sufficient, with the accumulating interest, to pay such loan at its maturity. All amounts received from betterments shall be paid into such Sinking Fund, until such fund shall suffice, with its accretions, to pay the matured bonds for whose security the fund was originated.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its passage.

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“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ!”

All which is respectfully submitted, by

EDWARD WINSLOW LINCOLN,

*Chairman.*

*Worcester, Massachusetts,  
March 8th, A. D. 1886.*

## APPENDIX A.

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[CHAPTER 168.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE.

AN ACT

Relating to Public Parks and Shade Trees in the City of Worcester.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by authority of the same, as follows:—*

**SECTION 1.** The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Worcester, in addition to the powers conferred by the one hundred and fifty-fourth Chapter of the Acts of the year Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-two, shall have and exercise all the powers, and be subject to all the duties, heretofore pertaining to the Board of Commissioners of Public Grounds and Shade-Trees provided for in Chapter One Hundred and Ninety-nine of the Acts of the year Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-six, except as herein otherwise provided.

**SECTION 2.** The powers and duties of said Board of Park Commissioners, enumerated in the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-two, Chapter One Hundred Fifty-four, shall extend and apply to all Public Grounds and Parks of said City, acquired before this Act takes effect, except that said Board of Park Commissioners shall have no authority to assess betterments in respect to any Parks or Public Grounds acquired before this Act takes effect.

**SECTION 3.** Said Board of Park Commissioners may be organized by the choice of a Chairman and Secretary from their own number, and a major part of said Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**SECTION 4.** The annual report provided for in the twelfth section of Chapter One Hundred and Fifty-four of the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-two, and in the twenty-first section of Chapter One Hundred and Ninety-nine of the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-six, shall be made in the month of March.

**SECTION 5.** Section twenty-one of Chapter One Hundred and Ninety-nine of the Acts of Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-six is hereby repealed.

**SECTION 6.** This Act shall take effect on the first day of May, Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-five.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 10, 1885.**

**Passed to be enacted.**

**J. Q. A. BRACKETT, Speaker.**

**IN SENATE, April 13, 1885.**

**Passed to be enacted.**

**A. E. PILLSBURY, President.**

**APRIL 14, 1885.**

**Approved.**

**GEO. D. ROBINSON.**

## APPENDIX B.

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[CHAPTER 154.]

LAWS AND RESOLVES, A. D. 1882.

**SECTION 3.** Such Boards of Park-Commissioners shall have power to make Rules for the use and government of the Public Parks within the limits of their respective cities; and for breaches of such Rules to affix penalties not exceeding Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) for one offence, to be imposed by any court of competent jurisdiction.

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### RULES OF THE PARKS-COMMISSION. OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER.

1. Dogs are prohibited in Elm Park, unless under the direct control and restraint of their owner; otherwise, they will be regarded and treated as outlaws. Owners of Dogs will be held personally responsible for any damage done by their animals.
2. No persons shall be suffered to affix, in any manner whatsoever, advertisements, handbills, placards, posters, or written or printed notices, or aught else that shall tend to their injury, to any of the Shade Trees of the City.
3. All persons are hereby forbidden —
  - To place any erection or obstruction on the Commons or Parks of the City.
  - To catch, trap or shoot Birds or take Birds' nests.
  - To injure, damage, destroy or dig up any turf, shrubs, trees, or plants, or break up or destroy the surface of the Commons or Parks of the City, or light any fire upon them.
  - To deposit any rubbish, manure, cinders, road sweepings, bricks, timber, building materials, or other substances, upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or in any pond or basin of a fountain in said Commons or Parks, or in any manner to fill up, defile, or pollute the same.

To place any carriage, cart, or other vehicle upon the Commons or Parks of the City, or upon the foot-paths over the same.

To fire any gun or other fire-arm (except of the Militia of the Commonwealth), or throw any stick, stone, or other missile.

Or generally, to act in a disorderly manner, or to commit any nuisance, or do any act tending to disfigure or injure the Commons or Parks or annoy or hurt any person frequenting them for the purpose of exercise, recreation, or transit.

Under a penalty of not exceeding Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) for each offence; of which one-half shall be paid to the person by whose testimony a conviction may be secured.

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TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL:—

The undersigned, a member of the Park-Commission of the City of Worcester, respectfully begs leave to disavow all responsibility for a document submitted to the Honorable Council at its last meeting signed by Edward W. Lincoln, and purporting to be the annual report of said Commission; the said report having been prepared and submitted by the chairman of said Commission, without consultation with or notice to any other member of it, and without the knowledge of any of them.

And the undersigned respectfully asks that, if the said document shall be printed with the City Document as the annual report of the said Commission, this disavowal may also be printed therewith.

Very respectfully,

J. EVARTS GREENE.

Worcester, March 12, 1886.



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